Cranfield University

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Inside the HR and Performance Black Box: how line managers use their people management discretion to influence individual first line employee performance outcomes

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how front line managers use their discretion to influence first line employee performance outcomes while simultaneously meeting their responsibilities for HRM practice enactment. This addresses an academic literature gap as well as providing insight to aid the understanding between line managers and HR functions. The study is a holistic case study set within single function inside a commercial multi-national organisation carried out with multiple levels of analysis. It is comprised of confidential primary data collection and triangulation interviews with 11 line managers from above and below average performing teams, 23 of their direct reports and 2 representatives from the HR function. Organisation documentation, reports and performance data were also examined. The study identified the discretionary practices used by line managers to influence employee performance outcomes alongside those they used for enacting their HRM practice responsibilities, while variations in discretionary practice usage between above and below average line managers helped explain differences in employee performance outcomes. Further research is needed to determine whether this is a causal relationship. The study also found new forms of HRM practice enactment carried out by front line managers extending our understanding on how this is carried out in organisations. Further variations in front line manager HRM practice enactment were not found to as related to employee performance outcome differences questioning that lack of compliance with HRM practices leads to poorer employee performance outcomes. There was limited overlap between the discretionary practices found and LMX theory suggesting a limited utility as a method for examining front line manager discretion in this context. The study also offers a practical model using CIMO-logic to help provide those in organisations better understanding between front line managers and the HRM practices they have responsibilities, with potential to build better interactions between front line managers and those in HRM functions. The findings extend our existing theory, suggesting more complex and dynamic approaches are used by some front line managers than previously thought with resultant implications for further research and practice.

Keywords: HRM-P; first line managers; discretion; first line employees; employee performance; HRM practices; people management; AMO; LMX; CIMO.

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Like all human endeavour we undertake a doctorate within a paradox which couples punishing isolation and individual effort with a total and complete reliance on others: making it both a solo and a shared effort. It is also an endurance testing one. When I began this venture in 2007 the world and my place within it was very different. And as the world has changed so too have I in fundamental ways as a direct result of the doctoral process. Therefore the endeavour has been longer, deeper and with far greater reach than I understood when I began it, meaning these acknowledgements are an inadequate record of the support I've received in my evolution as a critical thinker. Those I include I cannot thank enough: those omitted I have failed through lack of recall or appreciation of the part they played. So acknowledging this compromise I will try and document some of those who played a part in my journey as a researcher, beginning with my first thanks: those I have failed to mention.

My supervisor, Professor Clare Kelliher, consistently provided measured and considered input. Clare, your reliability over the years was one of the few aspects of the doctoral journey I was able to count upon, regardless of the winds blowing elsewhere. You always balanced patience with precise doctorial direction. It is gratefully and respectfully acknowledged here. Thank you for your skilful and astute advice and importantly for always being there.

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motivates exactly when needed. Thank you for your leadership, strength, courage and care.

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I had extraordinary access to the organisation used for the case study. Getting the amount of trust, information, materials, support, openness and freedom to navigate within 'Ochre Inc.' was a massive privilege. Those I interviewed offered their stories with such a degree of openness and candour I was shocked and humbled. Thank you for sharing your experiences so selflessly. And Duncan, without your help this could never have happened. Thank you for providing that opportunity.

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‘Mumster’, thank you too for your endless love. Finally Euan, Mum and Dad: I miss you all. It is to those in this paragraph that I do not just offer thanks, but provide a dedication: above all else, this is for you.

IN MEMORIA

I began this process with both parents alive and well. With my father being 77 at the start of this endeavour, over a decade older than my mother and already with failing health I knew there was an outside risk only one parent might be there when I completed my doctorate. Instead what unfolded was a sequence of events that my darkest moments never foresaw. My whole life my mother had a terrible cough being a former smoker. But in 2010, it became much worse and on Xmas Eve 2010 my father told me in private they were a bit 'worried' in that stoic west of Scotland way. As my father was not well I travelled up to the visits to the hospital for the tests with my mother, so I was there when the doctor provided the grim news: she had lung cancer.

Having made a remarkable recovered from a new hip only two years previously my mother had been wielding a new lease of life at 67, sprightly and not a single grey hair on her head. Her fitness was initially a sign for optimism, radiotherapy was scheduled and as a family we readied for a battle which, if not to save her life, would at least be fought to prolong it. Instead she was dead by the 28th March 2011, barely four weeks after that grim hospital visit.

My father, 80 by this time was bereft and never recovered. Despite the help, love and support of my brother, he too was dead by the 6th June 2013 from complications induced by septicaemia. He'd given up. Witnessing what had been a resolute and closely bound family unit, my kith, smashed apart suddenly with my mother's rapid death, my father's inexorable decline into grief and death has left a void. What more could I have done? What choices might have I have made that could have helped him find a new direction? These thoughts linger in the void, disrupting my grief and sleep. I missed her too Dad. And now I miss you too.

During these events I welcomed into my life and friendship a dear and trusted colleague, Euan Cowie. I had known Euan 'at a distance' for a few years, but his joining of our professional team, mutual doctoral research interests and open discussions around his own father's cancer and then death, brought an immediate 'kinship'. His own diagnosis with prostate cancer was a shock: his rapid decline and

death tragic for his wife and two talented daughters taking their first steps into post university life.

Euan my much missed kith thank you for your counsel, friendship and two small stones from a west coast beach. Mum and Dad, my much missed kin, thank you for giving me life, the values I have, the opportunity to succeed, the willingness to ‘hope’ and the confidence to ‘give it a go’. Because of you all I did take the path less travelled by and it has indeed made all the difference.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

APR	Annual Performance review – yearly formal meeting between LM and employee to discuss performance and development objectives
CIMO-logic	Context, intervention, mechanism and outcome logic.
CU	Cranfield University
EMEA	Europe. Middle East and Africa geographic region
FLE	First-line employee - front line employee with no direct reports aka employee or rep or IC
FLM	Front LM – LM of FLMs
HPWP	High performance work practices
HRMBP	Human Resource Management Business Partner
IC	Individual contributor – Ochre Inc. designation for a front line employee with no direct reports aka employee or rep
LM	line manager of FLMs
LMX	Leader-member exchange theory of leadership
PIP	Performance Improvement Process – discretionary formal performance improvement process invoked by LM in Ochre Inc.
PRB	Pay Review Board – formal body and process that the LM applies to for decisions on employee pay
QRB	Quarterly Review Board – quarterly formal sessions LM attends with employees to review 'deals' and progress towards completion of deals
Rep	Representative – as above, front line employee with no direct reports aka employee or rep
TRB	Talent Review Board – formal career development process in Ochre Inc. which LM attends and presents his team to for feedback and suggestions

1 Introduction

This thesis is concerned with investigating how the 'people management discretion' of line managers (LM) influences front line employee (FLE) performance, where employee performance means the outputs or outcomes which are attributed to individual employee's efforts by organisations. Using a qualitative holistic case study set within a single business I explore what interventions are used by LMs with people management responsibilities to influence the individual employee performance outcomes of first line employees (FLEs).

In this chapter I set out the structure for my doctoral thesis, framing my research within the larger debate on HRM and performance. I provide the aim of the study, including the research problem, the research question and also a definition of key terms employed.

1.1 The Personal Interest Background to My Research

My interest in LMs comes from my need to better understand the ways LMs are getting FLEs to perform. This involved research into the literature on Human Resource Management (HRM) since managers of FLEs now typically hold responsibilities for HRM practices, yet how they combine these responsibilities with those for FLEs is an area that is not well understood. I became curious about why those in managerial positions managing FLEs sat at the bottom of a clear 'hierarchy'. As a consultant scoping, designing and running leadership, managerial and function capability acquisition and development projects, I could see first-hand that generational, technological, global and societal changes meant LMs were operating in an ever more challenging environment from the one I inhabited. As I went about my consulting work I observed that this was equalled by a growing lack of understanding and appreciation of the ways that LMs who manage customer facing or other 'front line' positions actually influenced results. I could see the difference that LMs, especially in the way they used their discretion, were making to the results and value they created. Within this mix I was increasingly working with HRM departments and noticed an obvious tension between them and the LMs of FLEs. Charged with the twin burdens of demonstrating their own value while being at the front line of implementing strategy, HRM business partners would often appear divorced from understanding LM discretion beyond it

being a barrier or block. I witnessed an increase in measures and approaches to remove this discretion as it was increasingly viewed as problematic and a barrier, despite my own experience otherwise. Feeling 'caught in the middle' I sought answers to try and reconcile these tensions. Finding little professional appetite for answers I turned to the literature to help address this problem. A desire to have the skills to do this led me to commence my DBA in 2007.

As this study is being conducted as part of an Executive DBA there is the responsibility to develop a contribution to knowledge, meaning academic literature and the theory therein, and also to develop the potential for a contribution through an impact on practice. To meet this requirement, a decision was made to formulate the final output in the contribution to practice in the form of a design proposition (Romme, 2003), defined here as "a way of presenting knowledge linking interventions to outcomes" which is intended to help those in organisations understand why the outcomes they witness are coming about so that they can make choices on how they should intervene so that they can influence deliberately "how should things be?" (Denyer et al. 2008:394). A design proposition will be presented based on context, intervention, mechanism, outcome, logic (CIMO-logic). This is intended to provide practitioners a "template for the creation of solutions for a particular class of field problems" (Denyer et al., 2008:395).

1.2 The Academic Background to My Research

Becker et al. (2005, 2009) highlighted that the impact made by FLMs is often overlooked in leadership, management and strategic HRM thinking, yet these FLEs are often the ones who generate the most value and produce organisational performance. Going further Becker et al. (2005:3) add that when this is the case, through the exercise of their discretion, these are "the most highly skilled, hardest-working employees, exercising the most responsibility and operating in the most challenging environments". Paauwe et al. state that the way LMs use their discretion is of equal importance for those in the HRM function, since the HRM department "has long sought to convince others of its value" (2013:1). Therefore how LMs and FLEs produce performance is an area of professional and academic interest. Also, as the academic literature from studies on how HRM produces value in organisations, in particular as it shifts from performance outcomes (Arthur, 1994; Huselid, 1995; MacDuffie, 1995; Boselie, 2009)

to examining how HRM practices affect FLE levelled outcomes inside what is referred to as the 'black box' (Paauwe et al., 2013:79), LMs and their use of discretion have been identified as playing a central position in the translation of an intended to an enacted HRM practice with the resultant effect of influencing FLEs (McGovern et al., 1997; Truss, 2001; Wright, 2001b; Purcell et al., 2003; Hope-Hailey et al., 2005; Paauwe & Boselie, 2005a; Guest, 2011; Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Brewster et al., 2013). Purcell et al. (2003), Purcell & Hutchinson (2007) and Purcell & Boxall (2008) argue that when FLMs in an organisation are delivering value and performance in this way there are implications for the way those LMs who have responsibility for managing them use their own discretion, a view shared by Wright & Nishii (2007), Becker et al. (2009), Guest (2011) and Paauwe et al. (2013). Therefore understanding how LMs influence FLE performance in these environments is argued here to be of relevance and importance.

Yet there remains a lack of understanding how LMs are using their discretion in these environments (Purcell et al., 2003; Becker et al., 2005, 2009; Hales, 2005; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Boxall & Purcell, 2008). Moreover Hales (2005) highlights that steady increases in responsibility, including HRM practices, over time are creating an ever widening gap of our understanding of LMs of FLEs. McGovern et al. (1997) and Hope-Hailey et al. (2005) take the view that within this central position LMs impede the intentions of HRM practices being met. This can be from using their discretion to deliberately not implementing HRM practices for which they have responsibility (McGovern et al., 1997; Khilji & Wang, 2006) or, as is more commonly reported in the literature (Brewster et al., 2013; Paauwe et al., 2013), doing so in an inconsistent way that from the guidelines of the HRM function reduces the effectiveness of the HRM practice (Wright & Nishii in Paauwe et al., 2013). Those who share these views tend to hold the consensus that this arises because LMs have a lack of desire, capacity, competence or skill, support or adequate systems or procedures (Paauwe et al., 2013:91). Paauwe et al. (2013:92) point out though that much of the research identifying both the problems with LMs implementing HRM practices and the reasons for this have been generated from the perspective of those in HRM functions. Further they point out that when LMs or FLEs are included in studies, such as the work of Bos-Nehles (2010) and Bos-Nehles et al. (2013), a contrasting picture emerges. Purcell et al.

(2003) go further and argue that the discretion of LMs is not just central but "crucial" if HRM practices are to achieve the FLE performance intended outcomes. This view is supported by Harney & Jordan (2008) who agree with Purcell et al. (2003:48) that the interplay between FLE and managerial discretion, as LMs meet their people management responsibilities, is an area little understood but with significant explanatory power for how HRM practices are connected to FLE performance outcomes. Therefore within the HRM literature there is an interest in LMs as they are a recognised important link connecting HRM practices to FLEs and the outcomes they produce. But within the debate above while there are some areas in which it is known how LMs use their discretion for meeting their people management responsibilities, especially the HRM practice responsibilities they have, there still remains a gap in the literature.

Appelbaum et al. (2000) argue that employees perform well when they have the ability to meet the demands of their job, are motivated to use their own discretion to meet those demands and have opportunities available to them so they can be successful in their job (Purcell et al., 2003; Purcell & Hutchinson 2007; Paauwe et al., 2013). Described as AMO theory (Appelbaum et al., 2000), this has become the prevailing theory following much theoretical ambiguity (Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Paauwe et al., 2013:6) for explaining how HRM practices affect FLE level performance outcomes (Boselie et al., 2005; Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Paauwe, 2009; Paauwe et al., 2013), while RBV theory has been used to address HRM and organisational level outcomes (Becker et al., 1997; Boselie et al., 2005; Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Paauwe et al., 2013; Boxall et al., 2016). However, how this translates into actual FLE performance and in particular what part LMs' people management discretion plays in this is less well understood. This is because what little research has examined this discretion has done so using measures that indicate FLE performance, rather than exploring actual FLE performance outcomes, since the focus has been on understanding the relationship of perceived HRM practices and predictors of performance (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Paauwe et al., 2013; Harley, 2015).

Indicators of FLM discretion are also increasingly being used, with the LM and FLE dyad dynamic being increasingly examined using LMX theory to determine qualitatitve

aspects of the dynamic between an LM and their FLEs during research to understand employee perception of LMs in the context of HRM practice enactment (Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Sanders et al., 2010; Alfes et al., 2013a). This is because it is viewed as providing a robust and consistent way of accessing the "reciprocity" between LMs and FLEs (Alfes et al., 2013a; Alfes et al., 2013b:854; Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Sanders et al., 2010). However LMX theory was not developed to exanine FLM and FLE dyadic relationships in a people management context so may omit identification of important relational aspects of the FLM/FLE dyad needed to better understanding how LM discretion relates to FLE perofrmance outcomes (Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Harley, 2015).

Though all of these studies still support the importance of LMs' people management discretion for influencing FLE level outcomes, they are mainly designed to explore individual HRM practices (Bos-Nehles, 2010; Brewster et al., 2013; Paauwe et al., 2013; Harley, 2015; Boxall et al., 2016), though this is increasingly questioned as an approach because there is a lack of consensus of what HRM practices are of importance and how they actually work (Purcell and Hutchinson, 2007; Paauwe et al., 2013). Also while LMX theory is growing as a way of understanding how LMs use their discretion to influence employees the consensus from studies in this area is that the way LMs discharge people management responsibilities requires much greater understanding (Purcell and Hutchinson, 2007; Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Brewster et al., 2013; Farndale & Kelliher, 2013; Guest & Bos-Nehles, 2013; Paauwe et al., 2013; Wright & Nishii, 2013; Boxall et al., 2016).

The small number of studies which examined actual, not self-reported or measures that indicate FLE level performance outcomes, have established the importance of LMs' people management discretion for influencing these outcomes but not how they did this or how this affected individual FLEs (Purcell et al., 2003; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Harney & Jordan, 2008). There are therefore a number of gaps in the literature on how LMs' use of discretion influences FLE performance outcomes, especially from studies where multi-level and multi-stakeholder perspectives are sought (Wright & Nishii, 2013:110).

To address this and better understand the "crucial" part played by LMs of FLMs, I wanted to use the concept of people management and the 'people and performance' model developed by Purcell et al. (2003) to explore how LMs use the discretion they have for their combined people management responsibilities for HRM practice implementation and FLE performance outcomes to influence individual FLE level outcomes.

From my findings, analysis and discussion I extend existing academic theory by:

1) Offering a model of LM non-HRM discretionary practices with an explanation of how these interventions influence FLE performance outcomes
2) Presenting a form of LM enactment of HRM practice previously unseen in the literature
3) Producing evidence to illustrate the limitations from using LMX theory as a model to examine LM discretion
4) Development of a heuristic 'design proposition' model for use in practice to provide a vehicle for shared understanding between practitioners on LM discretion in a people management context.

1.3 Research Question

To address this research problem I chose to undertake an empirical study to address the lack of understanding on how LMs use their people management discretion to influence FLE level performance. As well as addressing the gaps in the literature this also has the aim of providing insights or approaches for HRM and LM practitioners to use to develop their own practice in order to achieve greater harmonisation between them in the pursuit of common goals. To provide focus to this study the main research question I propose is:

How do LMs use their people management discretion to influence individual first line employee performance outcomes?

To aid and guide the study I also propose the following sub question:

How do LMs use their people management discretion when enacting HRM practices?

1.4 Definition of Terms

Agency

This is the capacity of FLEs in an organisation to act independently and to make their own free choices (Barker, 2005; Edwards et al., 2014).

CIMO logic

CIMO (context, intervention, mechanism, outcome) logic refers to presenting an organisation problem and solution using the logical construction that causation, in a particular class of problematic contexts, arises through the use of an identified intervention type(s) which will invoke generative mechanisms which will deliver defined outcomes (Denyer et al., 2008:396). This is intended to provide practitioners a "template for the creation of solutions for a particular class of field problems" (Denyer et al., 2008:395).

Design Proposition

This is a term developed by Romme (2003) and here is defined as "a way of presenting knowledge linking interventions to outcomes" and is intended to help those in organisations understand why the outcomes they witness are coming about so that they can make choices on how they should intervene so that they can influence deliberately "how should things be?" (Denyer et al. 2008:394). Here it will be constructed using context, intervention, mechanism, outcome, logic (CIMO-logic) and is intended to provide practitioners a "template for the creation of solutions for a particular class of field problems" (Denyer et al., 2008:395).

Discretion

This refers to the agency, freedom and choice which an LM or an FLE has when carrying out their responsibilities as an FLE and which they can give or withdraw as they choose (Boxall & Purcell, 2008:23; Edwards et al., 2014).

Employee performance

Within the thesis this is taken as meaning the outputs or outcomes which are attributed to individual employee's efforts by organisations. For example units produced,

customer service quality ratings or as in this study, sales results measured in dollars and which are attributed to FLEs for the successful completion of sales with a customer by the employing organisation.

Front-line employee

Front-line employee (FLE) is defined as an employee who is in direct contact with the customer (Hales, 2005).

Human Resource Management (HRM)

HRM is defined as "the process of managing work and people in organisations" (Boxall et al., 2011:1504). This definition is used in this study in that it articulates the management of not only human resources within an organisation but human resources that perform to help organisational objectives.

HRM system

Arthur (1994) describes HRM systems as a collection of HRM policies and practices which together are designed and deployed to support an organisation achieve its strategic goals. This includes determining what type of work is carried out; how work and processes are organised; the procedures used in the recruitment of people; management, motivation and development of people to enable them to perform in their jobs; procedures to retain people within the organisation to minimise recruitment costs and maintain their contribution to the organisation; and if necessary procedures to end their employment contract (Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Boxall & Macky, 2009). That is the meaning that will be used here, irrespective of the type or conceptual underpinnings beyond the definition laid out here.

HRM policies and HRM practices

Mindful of Wright & Nishii's (2007) finding that what is intended, the HRM policy, may differ from what is enacted, the HRM practice, in this study HRM policies are the codified, defined plans, ideas and intentions of the HRM function which are subsequently turned into actions through HRM practices (Boxall & Purcell, 2008). Paauwe et al.'s (2013) distinction between HRM policies "what the organisation has defined as the practices that should be used by a manager/supervisor" and HRM

practices “those actually used by a manager/supervisor and their subordinates”, will also be observed in this study, so here HRM policies will be used to describe what “should be [done] by a manager/supervisor” while HRM practices will describe what is actually carried out using a “wide range of actual managerial behaviour around a notional policy standard” (Paauwe et al., 2013:9).

LM

LM is used in this study as a manager in an organisation who manages FLEs. This follows observations by Hales (2005), Huselid (1995) and Huselid and Becker (2009) that any distinction between first LM and LM has become blurred. However, as advised by Hales (2005) the term ‘first LM’ can lead to some confusion with ‘supervisor’ who has fewer responsibilities, especially for HRM practices, so LM will be used to reflect the higher levels of responsibility found in those who manage FLEs in order to avoid confusion with supervisors of FLEs.

LM discretionary practices

This refers to the understood actions, attitudes, behaviours and choices regulated by the judgement of the individual LM and which are understood to be intended to influence FLEs’ attitudes, behaviours and activity (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007:3; Boxall & Purcell, 2008:23; Edwards et al., 2014).

LMX Theory

Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) categorises leaders and followers by the two-way, dyadic, relationship that exists between them. LMX theory argues it is the quality of these leader–member exchange relationships between a leader and each of their followers which influences how their subordinates' understand and view their responsibilities, make decisions and gain access to resources. This therefore is used as a way of explaining how leaders influence the performance of their followers by providing a robust and consistent way of accessing the “reciprocity” between LMs and FLEs (Alfes et al., 2013a; Alfes et al., 2013b:854; Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Sanders et al., 2010).

People management

People management is used throughout this thesis and relates specifically to the combined responsibilities LMs have for HRM practice enactment and FLE performance outcomes and which give rise to discretionary practices used by LMs to influence their FLEs and their performance outcomes in an organisation (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007).

Structure

This is the recurrent, patterned arrangements which arise from formal or informal processes, systems or via the actions of others with power, and which influence or limit the choices and opportunities available to those in organisations (Barker, 2005; Edwards et al., 2014).

2 Review of the Literature

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I outline how the research question and sub questions were developed from my review of the extant literature, which is outlined in Figure 1. I include an explanation of how this related to the research problem and research question introduced in Chapter 1 as well as how this understanding of the literature has informed the selected research design (Bryman, 2012).

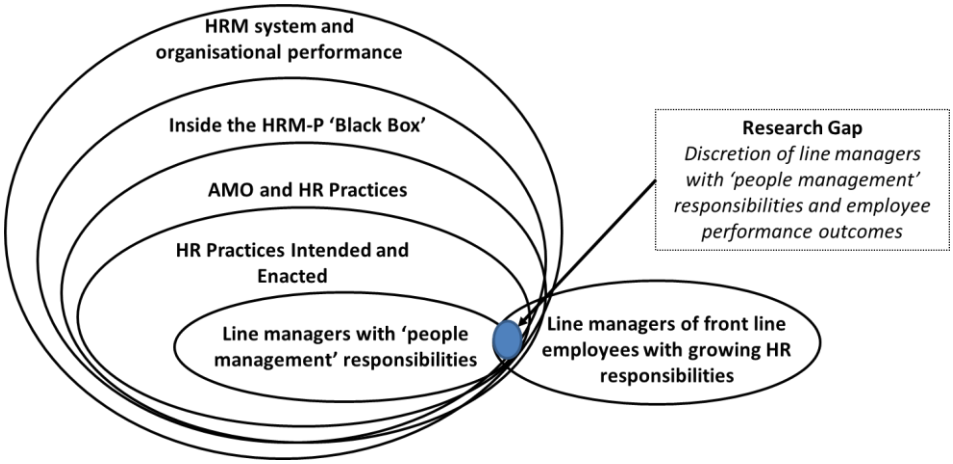

Figure 1 The Literature Review and Gap

Following this section the chapter has four sections: 2.2 *Use of Systematic Review* outlines the methodology used to carry out the literature review; 2.3 *HRM System and Organisational Performance* outlines the extant literature on the HRM-P debate within which the literature within this review is located and which the study seeks to contribute to; 2.4 *Inside the 'Black Box' – LMs' people management Responsibilities and Discretion* explains what is known about LMs' people management responsibilities and discretion and why LMs' people management responsibilities and discretion are of relevance for the area of the 'black box' debate concerned with connecting HRM practices to FLE performance; 2.5 *LM people management Discretion Literature Gaps* summarises the gaps, both within the literature and the methodology which has been predominant within it that are relevant to this study and the research problem it seeks to address; 2.6 *The Research Question* outlines the research question and sub research question, for which an empirical study was required, to address.

2.2 Use of Systematic Review

This literature review used the methodology of 'Systematic Review', described by Tranfield et al. (2003:203) as being carried out using a "replicable, scientific and transparent process". This is done to help in minimising the personal bias of the reviewer and "providing an audit trail of the reviewer's decisions, procedures and conclusions". This is an active process, meaning that as well as following clearly defined steps and approaches it deliberately involved discussion, challenge and debate from my panel. Appendix One documents the important decisional steps, activities and processes to identify the relevant literature domains, locate the texts related to my research problem, and extract an understanding of the extant literature and the gaps within it related which required an empirical study in order to address the research problem.

2.3 HRM System and Organisational Performance

HRM is defined as "the process of managing work and people in organisations" (Boxall et al., 2011:1504). Boxall & Purcell (2008:219) state that "relationships between HRM departments and LMs are important and often contested", with LMs providing "longstanding and often repeated criticism that HRM does not add value to organisations" (Paauwe et al., 2013:1). Paauwe et al. (2013:1) posits that in response to this tension "practitioners interested in HRM have long sought to convince others of its value". Within the academic literature a breakthrough in responding to this criticism came first with Arthur's (1994) study linking HRM practices with higher performance in steel mills, followed closely by Huselid (1995) linking High Performance Work Practices (HPWP), HRM practices, to the "wide range of actual managerial behaviour around a notional [HR] policy standard" (Boxall & Purcell, 2008:222) intended to support the organisation's aims, with levels of turnover, accounting profits and firm market value.

Since these seminal studies there have been two decades of research exploring the relationship between HRM and organisational performance (Paauwe et al., 2013). Differing definitions of what constitutes an HRM system have been debated and different measures of performance have been used, but the widely accepted view is that an association exists (Arthur, 1994; Huselid, 1995; MacDuffie, 1995; Boxall & Purcell,

2008; Paauwe et al., 2013) between an HRM system, defined by Arthur (1994) as a collection of HRM policies and practices which together are designed and deployed to support an organisation achieve its strategic goals, in supporting, and enabling, value adding activity for an organisation at the organisational level (Truss, 2001; Hope-Hailey et al., 2005; Boxall & Purcell, 2008). In this debate on HRM and organisational performance (the HRM-P debate), the consensus is that the HRM system has an empirically demonstrable (McGovern et al., 1997; Caldwell, 2003; Francis & Keegan, 2006; Paauwe, 2009) part in the performance outcomes at the organisation and business unit level within an organisation (Schneier, 1989; Arthur, 1994; Ulrich, 1997; Caldwell, 2003; Becker & Huselid, 2006).

However, a number highlight that although an association exists it is not definitive as, logically, if HRM systems are the driver of value adding activities this may be due to reverse causality since successful organisations may have the resources to invest in sophisticated HRM systems, or if sophisticated HRM systems are responsible there will be a time lag between the effect and the outcome which many early studies failed to account for (Wood, 1999; Guest et al., 2003; Wright & Haggerty, 2005; Paauwe et al., 2013). There are also suggestions that if the HRM system is helping organisations achieve performance outcomes through employees working harder than they might do without the influence of the organisation, then this is morally a form of exploitation of employees (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004; Peccei, 2004; Peccei et al., 2013). However, Peccei et al. (2013:17) highlight that demonstrating how this happens is something that remains to be done within the literature to appreciate the "overall quality of an individual's subjective experience and functioning at work". Therefore the overall consensus within the HRM-P literature is that the HRM system has a positive relationship with organisational performance outcomes at the organisation, business unit and employee levels (Arthur, 1994; Huselid, 1995; MacDuffie, 1995; McGovern et al., 1997; Truss, 2001; Hope-Hailey et al., 2005; Boselie & Paauwe, 2005; Purcell et al., 2003; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Paauwe et al., 2013; Harley, 2015), though this may also potentially result in negative consequences for employees (Peccei et al., 2013).

Yet while the consensus view is supportive of an association between HRM systems and organisational performance "the reviews reveal different levels of confidence about the strength of the association, about the quality of the research on which it is based and about the practical conclusions we can draw from it about the impact of HRM" (Boselie et al., 2005; Paauwe et al., 2013:4). Guest (1997) argued that to improve confidence in the "strength of the association" more needed to be done to show how HRM systems and organisational performance were connected, highlighting early in the HRM-P debate that the literature needed "a theory of HRM, a theory of performance and a theory on how the two are linked" to address "why or how this association comes about" (Guest & Bos-Nehles, 2013:80). This literature helped me frame the research problem within the wider debates in the HRM-P literature and let me identify which debates within it that my research problem sat within.

2.4 Inside the Black Box

Within the HRM-P many sub debates have arisen to address this challenge (Guest, 2011; Paauwe et al., 2013; Harley, 2015) and to, as Guest & Bos-Nehles (2013:80) put it, "open up the black box to explore how HRM and performance might be related", addressing what Paauwe et al. (2013:4) calls the "theoretical ambiguity" caused by a lack of a cohesive theory on how the linkage works and how it impacts on those participants who deliver value in an organisation through their acts and actions – employees (Paauwe et al., 2013).

How HRM practices are combined and deployed has occupied some attention within the 'black box' debate on how the HRM system can influence organisational outcomes (Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Guest, 2011; Paauwe et al., 2013). Some have looked at how HRM policies, what "should be [done] by a manager/supervisor", and HRM practices, what is actually carried out using a "wide range of actual managerial behaviour around a notional policy standard" (Paauwe et al., 2013:9), work together. Some argue this should be viewed as an overall system (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004) but most take a less 'Gestalt' approach and examine HRM 'systems' as either a contingency (Schuler & Jackson, 1987) or configurational (Delery & Doty, 1996). Contingency, also referred to as 'best fit', is a held by those with the perspective that when the HRM system is designed specifically to match the strategy of an organisation this will subsequently

help that organisation achieve the best or optimum performance outcomes as the HRM system is more closely aligned with the given strategy (Delery & Doty, 1996; Purcell, 1999; Becker et al., 2009: Paauwe et al., 2013). Configurational, also referred to as 'best practice' takes a different perspective. Here the consensus view is that there are an ideal collection of practices, most commonly seven but this varies (Pfeffer, 1995; Boxall & Purcell, 2008), which when operating together are the best way for the HRM system to help the organisation achieve optimum performance outcomes (Becker & Huselid, 2009; Paauwe et al., 2013). The HRM practices that together form this 'configurational' approach are understood to apply universally regardless of country, sector or industry (Huselid, 1995; Becker & Huselid, 2009) and are *job security*, *selective recruitment*, *generous reward based on performance*, *significant employee training*, *self-managed teams*, *lowering of hierarchy* and *wide sharing of information* (Pfeffer, 1994; Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Becker & Huselid, 2009). Paauwe et al. (2013) highlight that little evidence exists to confirm which approach is most associated with performance, and the consensus is that there are still areas where research is needed to address a number of gaps regarding which of either approach might offer an advantage in achieving organisational performance over the other (Paauwe & Boselie, 2005b; Boxall & Purcell, 2008). So while there is consensus that both approaches exist, there is no clarity on which might, if any, contribute to organisational performance. Therefore, despite nearly two decades of research, the literature has yet to meet the challenge set in 1997 by Guest (Paauwe et al., 2013; Harley, 2015; Boxall et al., 2016).

When the focus is moved from the organisational level to the employee level, within this part of the 'black box' there are fewer studies or explanations linking HRM practices and organisational performance than demonstrating the association between the HRM system and organisational level performance (Boselie et al., 2005; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Boselie, 2009; Paauwe, 2009; Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Paauwe et al., 2013; Boxall et al., 2016). As Boselie et al. (2005:75) state "indeed, while we found plenty of acknowledgements of the existence of the 'black box', and some speculation as to its possible contents, few studies tried to look inside". Wright & Gardner (2003:312) specifically stated that "theoretically, no consensus exists regarding the mechanisms by which HRM practices might impact on firm outcomes. This lack of theoretical development has resulted in few empirical studies that explore

the processes through which this impact takes place", and despite over a decade intervening since that statement has been made, progress in this area of research while growing is still slow (Guest & Bos-Nehles, 2013; Paauwe et al., 2013; Wright & Nishii, 2013; Harley, 2015; Boxall et al., 2016) and most of the research has been "focused on the standpoint of the firm" (Paauwe et al., 2013:5) and not enough on the employees within the organisation (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Alfes et al., 2013b; Farndale & Kelliher, 2013). However, more studies exploring employee centred outcomes and how HRM practices are related to these is beginning to emerge as a field (Brewster et al., 2013) following calls from Truss (2001) and echoed by Paauwe (2009) and Bos-Nehles et al. (2013).

As well as a gap in the literature, this is also a gap in practice (Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Becker & Huselid, 2009) resulting in healthy discussions within the HRM practitioner community but potentially less healthy tension in HRM functions and LMs when HRM practices have been assembled in a way that is out of alignment with the requirements of an organisation (Marchington & Grugulis, 2000; Truss, 2001; Lepak & Snell, 2002; Hope-Hailey et al., 2005; Nehles et al., 2006; Maxwell & Farquharson, 2007; Nishii & Wright, 2007; Guest & Bos-Nehles, 2013; Paauwe et al., 2013; Harley, 2015).

Yet this is still an area with a valuable contribution to academic theory but also a "highly practical issue" with "major implications for policy and practice" in organisations (Paauwe et al., 2013:204). This means addressing many of the outstanding questions is important but obviously beyond the scope of this study. This study will seek to contribute to this important field and address the challenge laid down by Guest (1997) by focusing on a small aspect within the HRM-P debate, namely the debates at the employee level rather than the organisation or business unit level.

2.4.1 AMO Theory

Paauwe & Farndale (2005) ask 'What variables explain the relationship between HRM practices and firm performance?' While there has been a lack of theory, the field is not absent of theory (Boselie et al., 2005). Wright & McMahan (1992) presented six theories to explain how HRM practices link to organisational outcomes. However, of these, only two have been used substantially in the literature (Paauwe et al., 2013).

The first of these is the resource based view (RBV) which was used substantially in the literature but is now used far less (Boselie et al., 2005; Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Paauwe et al., 2013). The RBV perspective argues that when an organisation's resources are valuable, rare, inimitable and non-sustainable, they will provide that organisation with a strategic advantage (Wernerfelt, 1984; Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Paauwe et al., 2013). RBV was explored and developed by Wright & McMahan (1994), but as it was found to be too generic and was not easy to adapt in order to help explain how HRM practices relate to performance (Paauwe et al., 2013) it is used far less.

The second theory that is now the most commonly used (Boselie et al. 2005; Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Paauwe et al., 2013) to explain the linkage between HRM practices and employee level performance is ability, motivation and opportunity (AMO) theory (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Boselie et al., 2005). It is particularly useful in studies where FLE performance outcomes are examined (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2003; Boselie et al., 2005; Paauwe et al., 2013). AMO theory operates on the premise that firstly an "HRM System can influence the skills, competencies and abilities" (Paauwe et al., 2013:4) of FLEs, providing them with the (A) ability to do the job, such as the skills, training or developmental support (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; secondly HRM practices are understood to "affect the motivation and commitment" (M) (Paauwe et al., 2013:4) of FLEs so that they apply their discretion to carry out behaviours beneficial to the organisation (Purcell et al., 2003); and thirdly HRM practices provide the opportunities (O) through "job design and processes that provide opportunities for the skilled and motivated workforce to positively affect organisational outcomes" (Paauwe et al., 2013:4). When the HRM practices result in enhancement in any or all of these three areas, this in turn encourages the FLEs to exercise their discretionary behaviour and so perform 'beyond contract', leading to better organisational outcomes than HRM Systems which do not (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2003; Paauwe et al., 2013). Appelbaum et al. (2000) illustrate a conceptualised link between the intention that the HRM function has for an HRM policy and the actual outcome that HRM practice creates using the three boxes illustrated in Figure 2.

AMO theory suggests that it is the provision of AMO, which by implication comes from the HRM practices that constitute an organisation's HRM system, that leads to better

organisational outcomes through the influence it has on the discretionary effort applied by those FLEs being managed (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2003, 2007; Harney & Jordan, 2008). Though it emerged from work in steel mills, its universal utility and applicability has become widely accepted (Boselie et al., 2005, Purcell & Hutchinson, 2003, 2007; Bartel, 2004; Martins, 2007; Harney & Jordan, 2008; Paauwe et al., 2013). AMO is neutral to the type of HRM system, whether 'best fit' or 'best practice' or organisational strategy, as AMO is focused on the localised approach taken at the FLE level within a specific context (Appelbaum et al., 2000).

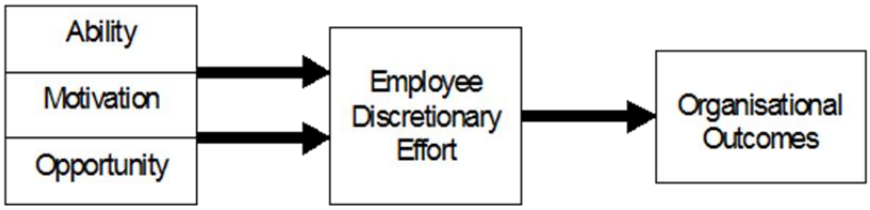

Figure 2 Conceptual Model Linking AMO to Organisational Performance (Appelbaum et al., 2000)

However, it should be noted that while AMO theory is popular, with over half of all studies since 2000 using it as the theoretical mechanism linking HRM practices with performance outcomes (Boselie et al., 2005; Paauwe et al., 2013), these studies are still predominantly focused not on actual employee performance outcomes but indicators of performance such as employee commitment or satisfaction ratings (Boselie et al., 2005; Hutchinson & Purcell, 2010; Bos-Nehles et al., 2013).

Therefore as this study is focused on FLE level outcomes it makes AMO theory appropriate to use in a study intended to answer the request by Purcell & Kinnie (2006) for more studies that include the FLE in the HRM-performance chain. Other studies, though still a relatively small number (Boselie et al., 2005; Alfes et al., 2013a,b; Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Farndale & Kelliher, 2013) are exploring FLE level outcomes as part of understanding the linkage between HRM practices and FLE performance, though these examine FLE perceptions which indicate performance through self-report questionnaires, such as commitment or engagement. Only Truss (2001), Purcell et al. (2003) and Purcell & Hutchinson (2007) have used actual performance data in their studies. However these have either been at the organisation level (Truss, 2001) or the department level (Purcell et al., 2003; Purcell & Hutchinson 2007) and as yet no study

has been carried out that explores AMO theory at the individual FLE level and how it may have influenced their discretion and therefore their actual performance outcomes.

2.4.2 LMs' People Management Responsibilities

The research has shown that the most common implementers of HRM practices in organisations are LMs (McGovern et al., 1997; Purcell et al., 2003); however, the term 'LM' has altered in meaning in recent years. In Purcell work for example, it ranged from managers of small departments with moderate budgetary control (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007) to those with larger departments and more significant budgetary control, ranging from retail environments to manufacturing environments (Purcell et al., 2003). Hales (2005) found that the LM has evolved over time from a supervisory to a managerial position. He found that while the types of responsibilities varied widely, LMs typically had high levels of responsibility for FLE performance outcomes which had a significant impact on the performance of the business unit, as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1 Abstract of Findings on Front LMs' Responsibilities (Hales, 2005:485-487)

Area of Responsibility	Part of Role (percentage of respondents)	Importance (percentage of respondents)
Implementing Changes in Work Practices	93%	79%
Dealing with Immediate Staff Problems	87%	68%
Attending Staff Review Meetings	86%	67%
Authorising Non Routine Tasks	85%	36%
Recommending Staff for Promotions	77%	50%
Conducting Staff Appraisals	71%	59%
Verbal Warnings for Disciplinary Procedures	63%	44%
Contributing to Training Processes	61%	31%
Giving Written Warnings	38%	24%

This suggests that the term ‘LM’ covered a broad range of managerial positions with differing levels of responsibility, supported by studies within the literature. Bartel (2000) looked at department managers in the banking industry, which in smaller branches was the business unit manager, while Harney & Jordan (2008) examined LMs in a call centre setting. However, the responsibilities of the position had not evolved to include the management of managerial staff and LMs were still mainly managing FLEs, though occasionally LMs also managed supervisors who would control subgroups. Titles varied but ranged from general manager of a retail outlet, engineering workshop or a professional service firm, where the LM had responsibility for business unit performance delivered by FLEs which could total over a million pounds (Hales, 2005).

However, the description of LMs also encompassed those with far lower levels of responsibility, such as department managers, where responsibility would typically be for hundreds or thousands of pounds of revenue generation or budget management (Hales, 2005). These are still significant amounts and echoing the reminder from Becker et al. (2005, 2009), LMs of FLEs can be responsible for significant areas where organisations are not just generating revenue and profit but the way they use their discretion to problem solve, apply innovation or generate impact on customers, is adding significant value to organisations.

While Hales (2005:498) found that at the core of LM responsibility was the achievement of performance outcomes, he also found that LMs had acquired additional responsibilities including budgeting, forecasting and increasingly commonly, HRM practice responsibilities alongside these other additional responsibilities, with 83% of respondents reporting that levels of responsibility and accountability of all types for outcomes delivered by FLEs had increased over time. Being based on a survey the research could not specify in great detail which HRM practice responsibilities had been added, beyond 47% saying that people management had been added to their responsibilities while 8% stated that ‘staff development’ had been added. However, while the numbers of responsibilities had grown, the levels of authority had not always increased commensurately. Hales (2005) noted that discrepancy between the responsibilities that existed and the level of authority for doing so, as outlined in Table 2.

Table 2 Abstract of Findings on Front LMs' Authority (Hale, 2005; pp 485-487)

Area of Responsibility	Authority (percentage of respondents)
Recruiting Staff	64%
Suspending Staff	47%
Setting Staff Levels	45%
Dismissing Staff	43%
Adjusting Staff Pay	37%
Promoting Staff	36%

This has led to what Hales (2005:501) calls 'job loading', which he suggests means that front LMs have acquired many of the responsibilities of middle managers but without acquiring the equivalent authority. A front LM in a modern organisation now appears to hold a higher level of responsibility than previously, but just as much accountability for the performance of their area of responsibility. This change suggests that the differences between LMs and front LMs have become blurred over recent decades. While some blurring of the responsibilities that are held with middle managers has occurred, a distinction still exists, albeit less clearly defined, because the front LM or LM typically manages non managerial teams, and possesses less authority in the way that HRM practices are designed and conceptualised, as well as having far less discretionary authority to alter these once they have been finalised (Harris et al., 2002; Gratton & Truss, 2003; Purcell et al., 2003; Hales, 2005; Maxwell & Farquharson, 2007; Becker et al., 2009). However, the term LM, rather than front LM, illustrates the difference between middle managers and LMs but moves away from the breadth of understanding and hence ambiguity that using the term front LM could bring (Currie & Procter, 2001; Maxwell & Farquharson, 2007; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Hutchinson & Purcell, 2010).

Echoing the findings of Hales (2005), the literature regarding the devolution of HRM to LMs dates back over 25 years and documented the devolution of an increasing number of HRM practices from HRM Managers or HRM Functions to LMs in organisations (Schneier, 1989; McGovern et al., 1997; Truss et al., 2002; Caldwell, 2003; Renwick, 2003). It describes the activity begun in the 1980s concerned with the elevation of the HRM function into a strategic 'Business Partner' which involves moving away from the ownership of many of the operational matters for which it is responsible to instead concentrate on spending time on linking HRM Systems to organisational strategy

(Ulrich, 1997; Caldwell, 2003). There is a lack of consensus as to why this has happened (McGovern et al., 1997; Truss et al., 2002; Whittaker & Marchington, 2003; Francis & Keegan, 2006), with reasons ranging from cost reductions leading to smaller HRM teams (Bond & McCracken, 2005), IT systems facilitating change (Renwick, 2003), to a strategic repositioning of HRM as a function which devolves operational 'day to day' HRM practices to LMs while occupying a more senior and business focused position in organisations, where it is integrated with the design and implementation of organisational strategy (Guest, 1987; Storey, 1992; Ulrich, 1997; McGovern et al., 1997; Truss et al., 2002; Caldwell, 2003; Francis & Keegan, 2006), but it is equally possible that it is some combination of all of these reasons.

The main responsibilities for the operational aspects which have been devolved away from the HRM function have been given to IT, outsource providers and LMs, though the extent of this is unclear (Cunningham & Hyman, 1999; Larsen & Brewster, 2003; Whittaker & Marchington, 2003; Bredin & Söderlund, 2007; Maxwell & Farquharson, 2007). While the actual HRM practices devolved to LMs are debated, as are what constitutes an HRM practice (Heavey et al., 2013), it is accepted that LMs have been given the responsibilities for FLE appraisal (McGovern et al., 1997; Whittaker & Marchington, 2003), performance management (Whittaker & Marchington, 2003; Maxwell, 2007), training activities and decisions on FLE training activities (Nijman et al., 2006), recruitment and selection decisions (Nowicki & Rosse, 2002), reward (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007), and grievance or disciplinary activity, including dismissals in certain instances (Purcell et al., 2003; Renwick, 2003; Cunningham et al., 2004).

Having the responsibility for these HRM practices demonstrates that they play a significant operational part within the HRM system (Renwick, 2003; Bond & McCracken, 2005) as well as a significant conceptual and methodological part (Guest & Bos-Nehles, 2013). Exactly how much though is again open to debate with some reporting that it has happened in 59% of organisations (Perry & Kulik, 2008) with variances by HRM practice and organisation type (Larsen & Brewster, 2003; Murphy & Southey, 2003; Hales, 2005). The rate and extent of devolution is varied in different countries within Europe though it can be reliably argued that it is taking place in the

major European economies, not just the UK (Larsen & Brewster, 2003; Mayrhofer et al., 2004; Papalexandris & Panayotopoulou, 2005; Nehles et al., 2006; Brandl et al., 2009). There is greater consensus on those which have remained within the HRM function, such as expertise on complex HRM matters, dealing with the interpretation and integration of employment laws and the design of HRM practices and policies. The latter, HRM functions retaining the design of HRM practices, has been cited as a source of tension between the HRM function and LMs (Currie & Procter, 2001; Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Guest & Bos-Nehles, 2013; Paauwe et al., 2013).

The literature here suggests a change in the responsibilities of LMs has taken place. While Hales' (2005) study alone would not be evidence of that, as it is based on self-report measures, it is hard to determine from that study if real changes or perceived changes had taken place. However the 'devolution to the line' literature helps corroborate these findings and confirms that a deliberate shift of HRM practices from those in the HRM function is understood to have taken place. This supports the assertion made by Purcell et al. (2003) and Purcell & Hutchinson (2007) that a new category of LM responsibility had been created by these changes. However, what the literature does not address is the consequences of these changes for LMs, their FLEs and the way they operate in organisations. Hales (2005) describes 'job loading', but his study was not designed to address what this meant in practice, i.e. how LMs combine these responsibilities and use their discretion to influence the performance outcomes of their FLEs.

2.4.3 Intended and Enacted HRM Practices

Gerhart et al. (2000) argued there was a difference between the espoused 'rhetoric' of HRM policy and the enacted 'reality' of HRM practice, followed by Truss (2001) who went further by highlighting the importance of recognising the importance of human agency within the HRM system. Wright & Nishii (2007) continued this argument and made the case that a difference exists between management intention, which is espoused, and is then encoded into an HRM policy, and the management action which then follows the HRM practices that are enacted. Wright & Nishii's (2013) model in Figure 3 illustrates this process.

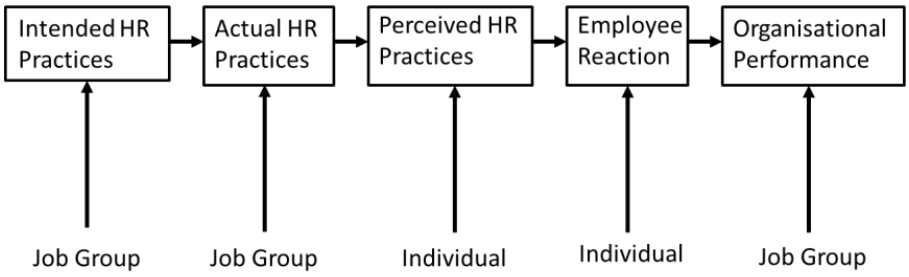

Figure 3 The Process Model of HRM (Wright & Nishii, 2013)

Here it suggests that what is intended is turned into what is then actually enacted, which in turn is what is perceived by the FLE, and which generates a reaction from the FLE which influences FLE organisational performance outcomes. While all the layers of management have a significant part to play in how management rhetoric becomes reality, the majority of enacting HRM practices sits with LMs. This places an onus on senior managers to 'walk the talk' of the HRM policies that are promoted within organisations and to recognise the dependency that they have on their LMs, especially those managing FLEs (Truss et al., 2002). Boxall & Purcell (2008:218) are clear that if an HRM system is to succeed in influencing FLEs to perform in a manner that achieves greater organisational performance, that it has a critical part to play turning management rhetoric into reality.

Consensus has grown that 'enacted' means the way an HRM practice was carried out "to make it effective" (Purcell et al., 2003:38). Until HRM practices are enacted therefore, HRM and HRM policies are only an 'espoused' idea (Purcell et al., 2003). Others have added to the view that it is FLEs' perceptions of HRM practices which are what has an effect on FLEs (Khilji & Wang, 2006; Paauwe et al., 2013). Therefore it is viewed that how an HRM practice is perceived by FLEs ultimately leads to the effect an HRM practice has on an employee (Wright & Nishii, 2013). Therefore, while an HRM policy may be well thought out and designed, that which is 'espoused', it is only when it is turned into reality by agents (Truss, 2001) in the organisation, meaning it is enacted, that it truly is 'brought to life (Truss, 2001; Purcell et al., 2003; Hutchinson & Purcell, 2010). This makes the discretion of the agents who implement and enact HRM practices of significance in understanding how HRM practices lead to FLE performance outcomes (Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Alfes et al., 2013a; Farndale & Kelliher, 2013). As the devolution to the line debate shows, these 'agents' are typically LMs, but within the

debate there is a consensus that the devolution has not been completely successful and as a result there is a lower level of consistency and effectiveness in the implementation of those HRM practices which are devolved for implementation to LMs (McGovern et al., 1997; Truss et al., 2002; Renwick, 2003; Hope-Hailey et al., 2005; Alfes et al., 2013a; Farndale & Kelliher, 2013). Wright & Nishii (2007) have identified this as an area of significance within understanding how HRM practices connect with FLE performance outcomes based on the view that the implemented HRM practice is what is perceived and is therefore what is 'real' for the FLE (Truss, 2001; Purcell et al., 2003), and consequently variations in consistency are equated as variations of quality of implementation and have become a focus in the literature and empirical research (Wright & Nishii, 2013). Wright & Nishii (2013) describe variation between intention of an HRM practice and that implemented by the LM as problematic, as this disrupts the potential "increased positive attitudinal reactions, increased cognitive skills relevant to the job and/or organisation, the increased productive task and contextual behaviours of employees" (Paauwe et al., 2013:103). The consequence of this is understood to be the resultant diminishing of the effectiveness of the intention of the HRM practice caused by the LM. This concept is illustrated in the model in Figure 4 where LMs' (represented by the 'S') variations in consistency in implementing HRM practice cause, through their actions, variations in perception and thus the behavioural outcome of the FLEs (represented by the 'E' on the right) and their reactions.

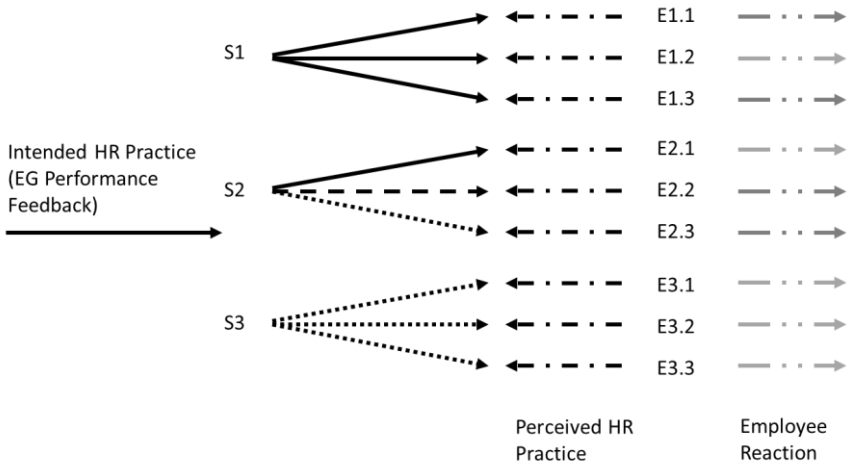

Figure 4 Inconsistent HRM Practice Effect Caused by LM Variations in Implementation (Wright & Nishii, 2013)

This positions the LM as a filter or barrier between what was intended and the outcome achieved (McGovern et al., 1997; Nehles et al., 2006; Nishii & Wright, 2007; Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Farndale & Kelliher, 2013; Wright & Nishii, 2013). The implementation of HRM practices by LMs through their discretion (Truss, 2001) therefore means that what is enacted may differ from what was intended (Wright & Haggerty, 2005; Wright & Nishii, 2013). This is argued to lead to negative effects on HRM practice effectiveness, FLE outcomes and potentially organisational performance, as well as on the careers of the LMs themselves (McGovern et al., 1997; Nowicki & Rosse, 2002; Renwick & MacNeil, 2002; Truss et al., 2002; Nijman et al., 2006; Goodhew et al., 2008) and the consensus for a long time has been that the LM's discretion has been problematic (McGovern et al., 1997; Nehles et al., 2006).

Guest & Bos-Nehles (2013) outline that this has resulted in a growing area of research into this area as there is increasing concern that HRM practices through the intermediating effect of LMs is leading to the espoused aim being somehow distorted, diminished or lost (Bartram et al., 2007). Guest & Bos-Nehles (2013) summarise the reasons LMs act as barriers as a lack of *desire,* and low levels of motivation and interest, particularly of the bureaucracy of their HRM responsibilities (Harris et al., 2002; Hope-Hailey et al., 2005; Watson et al., 2007). Though more recent studies by Harney & Jordan (2008) and Bos-Nehles et al. (2013) suggest that the level of motivation for LMs undertaking these responsibilities may be higher than previously found; lack of *capacity* or time to devote themselves as required to their HRM responsibilities (McGovern et al., 1997; Hales, 2005; Watson et al., 2007; Hutchinson & Purcell, 2010), though this could also arise from conflict with measures in performance management systems and rewards systems for LMs (Renwick, 2003; Bond & McCracken, 2005; Martins, 2007); lack of *competence* due to inadequate training, skill or capability (Truss, 2001; Renwick, 2003; Whittaker & Marchington, 2003); lack of *support* from the HRM function and the business partners who work within this (Whittaker & Marchington, 2003; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007); and unhelpful *policies and procedures* which create conflicting environmental pressures (Harris et al., 2007; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007) or confused prioritising on which are more important regarding short term operational performance, related tasks, or longer term HRM practices (McGovern et al., 1997; Truss, 2001; Maxwell & Watson, 2002; Purcell et al.,

2003; Whittaker & Marchington, 2003; Harris et al., 2007) which may arise from badly designed HRM practices (Nehles et al., 2006).

Overall these barriers, both the conceptual (Wright & Nishii, 2013) and the five operational ones outlined, are viewed by many as the source of tensions where representatives from the HRM function can seek to enforce compliance or take other approaches with LMs to increase consistency of HRM practice implementation (McGovern et al., 1997; Harris et al., 2002; Purcell et al., 2003; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Bos-Nehles, 2010). Most of the studies have operated a quantitative model where they test extant theory (Boselie et al., 2005) by numerical associations between HRM practices and predictors of performance (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013). These may provide associations but cannot offer commentary beyond deductive conjecture on how these associations arose. They are also typically studies where respondents are from the same level, or function, limiting the analysis of how the HRM implementation relates to individuals within a single organisation with all the unique contextual factors that exist inside an organisation setting but which the literature has identified as factors important in the step from espoused to enacted (Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Paauwe et al., 2013). Therefore they confirm the LMs' combined people management responsibilities and provide insight to the many challenges they face in combining these responsibilities.

2.4.4 LMs' People Management Discretion

Purcell et al. (2003) began their work in this area by examining what ways the implementation of HRM practices when implemented impacted on FLEs and their behaviour. Their research was carried out at the unit as well as the corporate level, taking an exploratory approach to exploring how FLE perceptions in a number of organisations of HRM practices related to the perception of their LM and also measures of commitment to the organisation and their job. Purcell et al. (2003) attempted to explore how LMs implemented their HRM practice responsibilities in a series of 12 studies that ran from 2000 to 2002. This included some actual FLE performance outcome measures, though these were at a department level. The combined outputs of this are illustrated in the 'People and Performance' Model which was produced as an initial result of these studies and is shown in Figure 5.

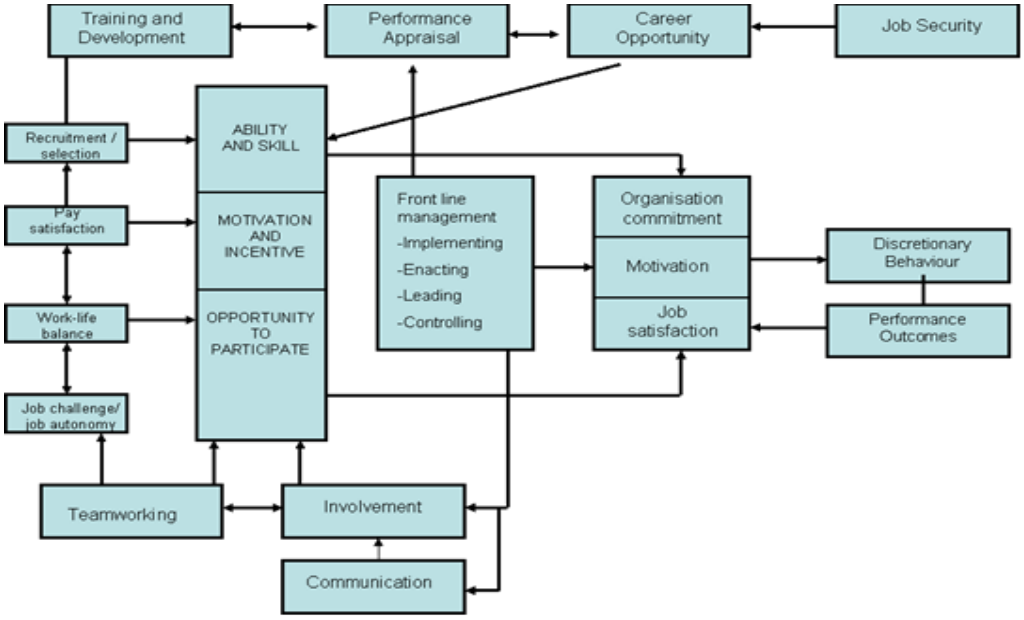

Figure 5 The 'People and Performance' Model (Purcell et al., 2003)

This was the first paper of its kind to include the perceptions of HRM practices and perceptions of the LM. This allowed not only the intention of HRM practices to be ascertained and understood but the actual output over a period of time to be researched as well. Their studies had a number of different methodological features to those previously carried out (Purcell et al., 2003) and since (Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Harney & Jordan, 2008; Hutchinson & Purcell, 2010; Harley, 2015; Boxall et al., 2016). Building on Appelbaum et al.'s (2000) AMO theory that encouragement of discretionary behaviour is the source of competitive advantage, firstly HRM implementation was separated into two separate acts: *implementation*, which is whether the HRM practice is used by the LM or not, therefore what is done, and *enactment*, which is the way that the HRM practice is actually carried out by the LM, so how it is done. Secondly they incorporated in their model the use of people management discretion by LMs and FLEs as important determinants of value and organisational performance, a call made later by Becker et al. (2009). Thirdly they incorporated AMO theory into the conceptual understanding of how the enactment of HRM practices influences FLEs. Fourthly the LM was incorporated as a central figure in the studies and as a result was found to be not only important in the operational implementation and enactment of HRM practices, but 'crucial' to these achieving a positive response from

FLEs as well as superior performance outcomes (Purcell et al., 2003; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007).

Conceptually, the notion that Purcell et al. (2003) advocate is that LMs use their own discretion through the way they enact HRM practices alongside their other non-HRM responsibilities for leading and controlling, neither of which is precisely described by Purcell, to enhance their FLEs' ability, motivation and provision of opportunity to perform, and as a result influence FLEs' own use of discretion. This was the first approach that recognised that the LM is 'crucial' if HRM practice is to produce the desired FLE-level attitudes leading to discretionary behaviour, not by how closely they followed the policy or minimised deviance from the procedures, but in the way they 'brought to life' HRM practices or, in a number of different examples in different organisations within the study, overcame shortcomings in the HRM practices only evident once they were enacted (Purcell et al., 2003; Boxall & Purcell, 2008). This was also the first model conceptualising the HRM-performance link that included the LM, discretion and the AMO framework to posit that the enactment of HRM practices was a more dynamic matter than the strongly compliance-focused methods advocated since (Wright & Nishii, 2007). This framing of the importance of LMs by Purcell et al. (2003) recognises that as well as implementing HRM practices in a confusing environment (Gelade & Ivery, 2003; Den Hartog et al., 2004; Hope-Hailey et al., 2005), they are often doing so under an increased workload than previously (McGovern et al., 1997; Hales, 2005; Wright & Haggerty, 2005; Wright et al, 2005; Harney & Jordan, 2008).

While much of the historic research has been at the level of identifying in what ways LMs are problematic in the implementation of HRM practices (McGovern et al., 1997; Truss, 2001; Larsen & Brewster, 2003; Renwick, 2003; Wright & Nishii, 2007) the work by Purcell et al. (2003) and Purcell & Hutchinson (2007) as well as other studies (Watson et al., 2007; Harney & Jordan, 2008; Brandl et al., 2009; Bos-Nehles et al., 2013) are identifying that LMs' people management responsibilities are more complex and have outcomes less problematic than has previously been understood; for example, it has also been identified that there is a difference between how different LMs cope with these barriers, which is determined by a range of personal and experiential factors (Hope-Hailey et al., 1997; Khilji & Wang, 2006; Goodhew et al., 2008) while the

extensive work in this area by Purcell, Hutchinson, Kinnie and Boxall (Purcell et al., 2003; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Hutchinson & Purcell, 2010) have led them to suggest that LM discretion in HRM practice is less about deviation (Wright & Nishii, 2013) and more about adaptation to ensure HRM practices hold the organisation 'function effectively' (Boxall & Purcell, 2008:21). So, rather than being 'perverse' (Boxall & Purcell, 2008:219) they can often be adding value (Farndale & Kelliher, 2013), though as Farndale & Kelliher (2013) emphasise, echoing Truss et al. (2002), they do this within the context of the informal or 'real' culture' within the organisation (Boxall & Purcell, 2008).

However, rather than examine how LMs use their discretion and why, much of the focus of research and discussion has been on studying the HRM practices for which LMs have responsibility from the perspective of trying to ascertain the level of effectiveness of the HRM practices when implemented (see Bartel, 2004; Alfes et al., 2013a,b; Farndale & Kelliher, 2013) than on what discretion was used by LMs, and importantly how and why this was done in the context of understanding what motivated the changes made. This has seen a series of studies at the task level attempting to understand how LMs are operating as an extension of the HRM function, how the LMs are perceived to have performed the HRM responsibilities they have and what problems or deviations from the intention have resulted from this (see Cunningham & Hyman, 1999; Church & Waclawski, 2001; Gibb, 2003; Cunningham et al., 2004; Bond & McCracken, 2005; Alfes et al., 2013a,b; Farndale & Kelliher, 2013). Although the latter studies are less critical of LM discretion, they still are the norm in not seeking to explore it for understanding. Some have sought to better understand the reasons they do not implement and enact HRM responsibilities as they were intended (see Papalexandris & Panayotopoulou, 2005; Goodhew et al., 2008) while others have identified which were the key barriers that impacted on LMs being able to perform the HRM practice responsibilities they had (Nehles et al., 2006; Watson & Maxwell, 2007; Watson et al., 2007; Bredin & Söderlund, 2007; Martins, 2007).

From the research in the literature when LMs have been asked about their views on the HRM practice responsibilities they have, they indicate a desire and motivation to undertake this part of their people management responsibilities (Nehles et al., 2006;

Guest & Bos-Nehles, 2013; Bos-Nehles et al., 2013) but indicate that the responsibilities they have conflict with the level of authority they possess as well as the pressures they face from other parts of the organisation (Renwick, 2003; Hales, 2005; Martins, 2007). In addition, the literature informs us that a number of factors need to be in place for LMs to be committed to supporting the implementation of the HRM responsibilities they have: a clear conceptual understanding of what they have to do; clarity on the responsibility they have and the effectiveness that implementation will provide; affective commitment from believing in their involvement in this HRM practice (Maxwell & Farquharson, 2007), or personal motivation towards this aspect of their overall responsibilities (McConville, 2006); clear support from the HRM Function (Nehles et al., 2006; Bos-Nehles et al., 2013) as well as strong relationships with them (Nowicki & Rosse, 2002). At other times they highlight that the fulfilment of this part of their role relies solely on their own discretion and is down to their own motivation (McGovern et al., 1997), such as in Nehles (2006) and Bos-Nehles et al. (2013) where it was found that LMs have a 'desire' to fulfil the HRM practice responsibilities they have but choose to spend their time on other things. This could be because while LMs would like to focus on the HRM practice responsibilities they have, the environment in which they exist pressures them to focus on other, more short-term tasks (McGovern et al., 1997; Hope-Hailey et al., 2005) making them reliant on their own discretionary choices on how to discharge their responsibilities (Khilji & Wang, 2006; Watson et al., 2007; Brandl et al., 2009). However, though these effects are identified, they are not explained within the literature as that is beyond what the studies were designed to find out.

Therefore, from an LM perspective, there is a lack of knowledge and understanding, and a gap in knowledge where more research is needed. Furthermore, much of the criticism of LMs can be reframed as they are in many ways found to be attempting to discharge their people management responsibilities in often hostile environments (Purcell et al., 2003; Hales, 2005; Martins, 2007; Bos-Nehles et al., 2013), without adequate training (McGovern et al., 1997), with a distant relationship to HRM Functions (Nehles et al., 2006) and often reliant on their own motivations to determine the difference between success or failure in the way they discharge their HRM practice responsibilities (Brandl et al., 2009). In addition, the new HRM practice responsibilities are often in conflict with the existing responsibilities they have (Hales, 2005; Hope-Hailey et al., 2005). The

work of Purcell et al. (2003), however, used an intensive study, multiple data points, a longitudinal case study and views of LMs and FLEs, as well as HRM respondents. Together these helped bring greater insight into how LMs manage their HRM practices responsibilities and their FLE performance responsibilities and began steps towards the conceptualisation of LMs' combined people management responsibilities.

However, it is not able to help us understand better the interface between LMs and those in the HRM function, an area of importance and of tension in organisations (Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Paauwe et al., 2013) and an area of concern in the literature (Renwick, 2000; Truss, 2001; Whittaker & Marchington, 2003; Caldwell, 2003). For example the Selfridges case study undertaken by Purcell et al. (2003) then later published in Purcell & Hutchinson (2007), where changes to the way the LM enacted their HRM practice responsibilities were reviewed by middle managers and members of the HRM function as a result of the findings of Purcell & Hutchinson (2007). The organisation and HRM function redesigned how LMs were selected, changing LMs as a result and providing further training (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007:14-15). The result was an improvement in performance a year later when data were again gathered by Purcell & Hutchinson's team (2007). This suggests that as well as the changes made to how the LMs enacted their 'people manager' responsibilities, the interface provides an explanation for the change in performance found. It is conceivable that the 'sense of motivation and commitment' improvement of LMs found (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007:16) may have arisen because the way the HRM practices were to be enacted were not correctly specified by Selfridges in the first place. This suggests that as well as changing what the LMs did, Purcell & Hutchinson (2007) changed how they interacted with middle managers and those in the HRM function, which contributed to the outcomes found. However, this important variable is not captured in the 'people and performance' model as an influence on the discretion of the LM.

Therefore the 'people and performance model' is argued to be a useful model that provides the first steps towards a credible theoretical framework and conceptual model for the way LMs use their people management discretion to interact with FLEs and consequently influence the discretion of these FLEs with a consequent effect on the organisational performance outcomes they produce. It is also the only comprehensive

conceptual framework within the literature, updated by Purcell & Hutchinson (2007) in response to the work of Wright & Nishii (2007), that explains how HRM practices lead to organisational performance involving LMs and connecting theory (AMO) of how the LM and these combined lead to FLE performance outcomes, though its wider use within the literature has been limited (Harney & Jordan, 2008). For these reasons it will be used to inform the development of the research question and design of this study.

Helped by the pioneering work of Purcell et al. (2003) and Purcell & Hutchinson (2007) a changing perspective on LMs is slowly beginning to emerge (Guest and Bos-Nehles, 2013). Boxall & Purcell (2008:219) make it clear that "LMs are not ciphers or simple conduits" and that their people management discretion was often the way that an espoused HRM policy within the "informal" and "real" culture could be made to succeed. This meant that when using their people management discretion to alter the way they enacted an HRM practice they were not automatically being "perverse" (Boxall & Purcell, 2008:219), but may be being proactive and helpful.

This is slowly being recognised by other commentators. Bos-Nehles (2010) for example has found that the perception which has been developed over time has mainly been derived from HRM respondents to surveys, therefore may be producing a narrow or one-sided view. But while LMs have an arguably significant place within HRM practice implementation and enactment, this is not matched by the extent to which participants in the debate have looked at understanding how LMs manage their combined HRM, performance-related and other people management responsibilities (Purcell et al., 2003; Boxall & Purcell, 2008). Most studies in this area have instead focused on the way they are involved in deploying HRM practices (Brandl et al., 2009). Guest & Bos-Nehles (2013:81) outline that LMs are 'primary implementers' in translating espoused HRM policy into actual HRM practice, as well as significant 'primary evaluators' of the practice's utility. Purcell et al. (2003) go further in stating that as well as being in the causal chain from espoused to enacted, they are "crucial" to whether that HRM practice positively influences an FLE in a way that will enhance their discretion and willingness to perform.

However, research examining how the espoused 'rhetoric' of HRM policy and the enacted 'reality' of HRM practice takes place, the experience of the LMs involved and

the way that environmental factors and their own discretion have combined during HRM practice implementation, is lacking in the literature. So while there is a consensus that a difference exists between what was intended and what is enacted (Wright & Nishii, 2007), which arises because of the discretion LMs have for the enactment of HRM practices (McGovern et al., 1997; Truss, 2001; Purcell et al., 2003; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Guest & Bos-Nehles, 2013), how LMs use their discretion to combine both aspects of their people management responsibilities is not understood from the perspective of the LM population.

2.4.5 People Management Discretion and Individual FLE Performance

Purcell et al. (2003) found a strong association between the people management discretion applied by LMs and both indicators of performance and actual performance outcomes. The former was shown by the large number of statistically significant relationships found across organisations in the study between 'involvement', 'respect by manager' and 'good employee relations', i.e. found in 75% of the organisations researched as being related to a positive view of HRM Practices. The latter was shown when data were collected before and after one of the organisations made changes to the way LMs used their people management discretion with the result that performance of the department also improved, with measures for sales and customer satisfaction, as well as staff morale measures all increasing (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007). However, no control was used and other explanations could also account for these changes.

More persuasive of the relationship of LMs' people management discretion was the differences found between different business units from within the same organisation where the only significant difference, as all used the same HRM practices, was the measured perception of the discretion of the LM. Those LMs who used their people management discretion in the manner best regarded by their FLEs also happened to be based at the best performing stores, and the least well regarded LMs were in the poorest performing stores (Purcell et al., 2003:40-41). Although again, other explanations are available for why this relationship existed, including Wright et al.'s (2001a) observation on the time lag between effective FLE management and performance outcomes. However, across all their studies they repeatedly showed that, while the relationship

with performance could have other explanations, there was a 'critical' relationship perception of LMs' people management discretion and level of FLE commitment, job satisfaction and motivation (Purcell et al., 2003). When Harney & Jordan (2008) used the 'people and performance model' to look at the interface between LMs and FLEs when implementing HRM practices, similarities emerged on the importance of LMs' people management discretion being the "critical mediating variable" (Harney & Jordan, 2008:275). Therefore rather than finding them an impediment, Purcell et al. (2003) found that LMs were overall more supportive than the literature suggested and, further, were more important than the HRM practices in influencing FLE performance outcomes when the actual performance data were examined within two of the case study sites and a stronger relationship with LMs than HRM practice perception was found in both cases (Purcell et al., 2003; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007).

Purcell et al. (2003) carried out an exploratory approach when investigating LMs' 'people management discretion', from which they identified four approaches taken by LMs when using their people management discretion. The four aspects of people management discretion were split into two groups. The first relates to the HRM practice responsibilities that LMs have and separates HRM practices implementation into 'implemented', did they do it, and 'enacted', how they did it, incorporating the call from Truss (2001:1146) to take account of the "informal organization" and the discretion of LMs. These are encircled in the 'people and performance' model in Figure 6.

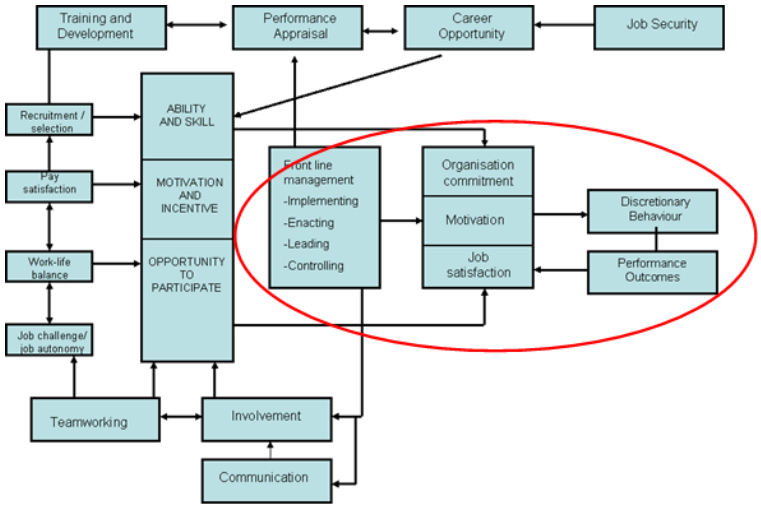

Figure 6 LMs' people management Discretion (Purcell et al., 2003)

Implementing relates to physically putting the HRM practice into operation, in effect carrying out the task. Omission here negates any intention the HRM practice had. Enacting refers to the manner in which the task implemented is completed. This can be done in a perfunctory or enthusiastic way, or may not be completed, so is not fully enacted. Each approach is understood to produce different outcomes from the same HRM practice but is deployed in different ways. This highlights the specific importance of the way that an LM can bring a practice to life by the enthusiasm they bring to its execution, or the quality in how they adapt it to a specific situation. This includes the way rapport is established with FLEs, how the actual practice is contextualised to an individual's motivational or situational needs, or the way that the practice is 'sold' to an individual or team. For example, leading by example when that is seen as important or the converse if it is not (Purcell et al., 2003).

Taking an example from the literature to illustrate this: the implementation of an HRM practice on 'reward and recognition' could involve the LM using their discretion during 'enactment' to choose whether or not to grant time off, give more challenging work or added responsibility (Purcell et al., 2003; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007); or when enacting an HRM practice on 'learning and development' they could choose to offer additional 'day to day on the job training, informal chats, coaching or mentoring' (Nijman et al., 2006) as well as providing access to knowledge sharing exercises or determine who had access to training or development opportunities (Schneier, 1989). Harney & Jordan (2008) also suggested that HRM practices which were not suitable for the FLE environment were unclear, contradictory or poorly conceived, were made better through the discretionary actions of LMs, also a finding of Purcell et al. (2003) and Hutchinson & Purcell (2010). This, coupled with Nehles et al.'s (2006) review of the literature, found that many of the challenges LMs faced arose from poor policy or procedural design, which, together with the studies of Purcell et al. (2003) and Harney & Jordan (2008), suggest that LM deviation may not solely arise from LM ability deficiencies (McGovern et al., 1997; Truss, 2001; Renwick, 2003; Hope-Hailey et al., 2005). What Purcell et al. (2003), Purcell & Hutchinson (2007), Harney & Jordan (2008) and Hutchinson & Purcell (2010) show is that FLEs' experience of HRM policies is inextricably linked to the people management discretion of LMs, an

‘interactive and dynamic relationship between the leadership behaviour and the impact of HRM practices’ (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007).

The second area in Purcell et al.’s (2003) model regarding how line managers implement and enact HRM practices relates to the other part of people management responsibilities for FLE performance, which are the ways that an LM uses their people management discretion to influence FLE performance outcomes alongside the HRM practice responsibilities. ‘Led’ are the “leadership” behaviours (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007) and ‘control’ the steps for ‘monitoring’ FLEs (Purcell et al., 2003). LMs’ people management discretion means that these can vary significantly in how LMs behave, from a style of correction when something has been done incorrectly to the opposite of providing self-direction or influence that encourages FLEs to use their own discretion on the way they choose to do their job (Purcell et al., 2003:39).

Purcell et al. (2003) emphasise the use of exercising discretion in all aspects of FLE behaviour, regardless of how menial those aspects may appear, as important in delivering organisational performance and that the exercise or removal of discretion is not always conscious – it can be managed subconsciously by FLEs – but is always a vital component in achieving organisational performance outcomes (Purcell et al., 2003), something later echoed by Becker et al. (2005, 2009). By varying behaviours within and across these four aspects of LMs’ people management discretion, Purcell has argued that the discretionary behaviour of FLEs alters, with a subsequent effect on the levels of effort and motivation applied by the FLE (Purcell et al., 2003).

Initially, Purcell et al. (2003) suggest the four aspects of people management discretion are related to HRM practice implementation alone. But, recognising that people management discretion was “inextricably linked” to discretion for FLE performance because of the ‘symbiotic relationship’ between the HRM practice responsibilities and FLE performance responsibilities, this distinction was removed and people management discretion describes all LM discretion related to HRM practice responsibilities and FLE performance responsibilities (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007:3). In terms of FLE discretionary responses to LMs’ people management discretion, this includes ‘emotional labour’ such as smiling or the application of knowledge to solve a problem, or suggesting a solution to a client or customer (Purcell et al., 2003:5). Purcell &

Hutchinson (2007) and Boxall & Purcell (2008:219) suggest that it is the quality of the interpersonal relationships between the LM and individual team members that determines how they influence FLE performance discretionary outcomes and suggest that a useful way of exploring this is through the use of LMX theory (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995:237) as a form of indicating FLM discretion and the effects it may have. This is because it is viewed as providing a robust and consistent way of accessing the "reciprocity" between LMs and FLEs (Alfes et al., 2013a; Alfes et al., 2013b:854; Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Sanders et al., 2010). This view of the importance of the people management discretion of LMs, if not explicitly how Purcell & Hutchinson (2007) have defined it, is now increasingly being shared by others within the literature (Guest & Bos-Nehles, 2013); for example, heeding the call for the use of LMX as a theory for exploring LM and FLE relationships, Alfes et al. (2013a) used a 7-point measure (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995:237) to explore the effect of LMs' people management discretion on employee engagement. Using this method in a survey of 297 employees, they concluded "the enactment of positive behavioural outcomes, as a consequence of engagement, largely depends on the wider organisational climate and employees' relationship with their LM" (Alfes et al., 2013a:330). Increasingly the LM and FLE dyad dynamic is being increasingly examined using LMX theory to determine qualitative aspects of the dynamic between an LM and their FLEs during research to understand employee perception of LMs in the context of HRM practice enactment (Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Sanders et al., 2010; Alfes et al., 2013a).

However, while an approach such as LMX theory can be used to confirm that LMs' people management discretion affects FLEs, it cannot tell us how this is happening in the complex and intense organisational environments that Hales (2005) suggests LMs and FLEs are operating within. This is because LMX theory was not developed to exanine FLM and FLE dyadic relationships in a people management context so may omit identification of important relational aspects of the FLM/FLE dyad needed to better understanding how LM discretion relates to FLE performance outcomes (Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Harley, 2015). Further recent contributors to the literature investigating the effects of LMs' people management discretion on FLEs in the context of HRM practice implementation have all used these hypothesis testing methods developed from the extant literature through the quantitative analysis of a questionnaire.

For example Alfes et al. (2013b) also took this approach, when they surveyed 1,796 participants in two studies to examine perceived LM behaviour and perceived HRM practices, and concluded that these too were linked with employee engagement. As employee engagement is linked with individual performance, this suggests that the LM is important in individual FLE performance, but methodologically is not designed to explain how. An approach followed by Farndale & Kelliher (2013), which in this case examined FLE organisation commitment, also found a relationship with it and LMs' people management discretion.

How LMs use their discretion to direct and manage the operational activities, those activities involved in actually completing tasks that lead to performance outcomes, of FLEs in a people management context is an area where there has been little research (Purcell et al., 2003; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Harney & Jordan, 2008; Boxall, 2013; Paauwe et al., 2013, Harley, 2015; Boxall et al., 2016). This is despite the acceptance that through the resultant "leadership behaviours" LMs will influence "employee attitudes towards their job and their organisation" as well as have a resultant effect on the "employee perceptions of HRM practices" (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007:4). Studies have instead typically omitted the detail of operational LM discretionary behaviour and instead used indicators for the way LMs' discretion has influenced FLEs' discretion in pursuit of performance such as employee engagement, or measures of organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) (Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Alfes et al., 2013b; Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Harley, 2015).

Only a few studies have explored what LMs do in directing FLE activity (Harley, 2015). Harney & Jordan (2008:288) examining a call centre setting acknowledged that LM discretionary influence on FLE activity was taking place but their study was focused on how this was used by the LM in the "general style and behaviour" used in HRM practice enactment. Purcell et al. (2003:39) in their study of 12 organisations initially described LM discretionary influence on FLE discretionary activity as being either "lead", deliberately left "loose" and general and described as "good management", or "control" which is "controlling the behaviour of their employees" and also is deliberately described in broad terms as a "wide range of activities", before Purcell & Hutchinson (2007:4) merged these together into the term "leadership

behaviours". Therefore there is a lack of research in this area and the research currently taking place is using methods which cannot capture how LMs are influencing FLE discretionary activity (Harley, 2015; Boxall et al., 2016).

Therefore to build on these findings other approaches are needed, for while they show that LMs' 'people discretion' is influencing FLEs, it is unclear from the literature how that discretion is affecting FLE performance (Hutchinson & Purcell, 2010; Alfes et al., 2013a,b; Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Farndale & Kelliher, 2013). Purcell et al. (2003), Purcell & Hutchinson (2007), Harney & Jordan (2008) and Hutchinson & Purcell (2008) have provided some insight into how this operates in practice, in the approach taken by LMs using their people management to implement and enact their HRM practices and 'lead' and 'control' their FLEs.

However, the method used by Purcell et al. (2003) to capture their data on 'led' and 'controlled', used a hypothesis testing questionnaire so consequently these have never been clearly defined beyond general descriptions. For example 'led' is described by Purcell et al. (2003:39) as the "interpersonal skills of LMs" which are used to "communicate information", "respond to suggestions", "treat employees fairly" and manage "operational problems" while 'control' is equally vague, being defined in Purcell et al. (2003:39) as "controlling the behaviour" of FLEs, who then list a general description of activities which includes "supervise", "monitor", and ends with "trust". Purcell & Hutchinson (2007:3) addressed this later by reframing these as "symbiotic" and "inextricably linked", merging these together into loose categories of people management discretionary "leadership behaviours". Harney & Jordan (2008) explored these approaches using 'managerial style' and while verifying the importance of people management discretion for influencing FLE performance outcomes, were unable to provide greater granularity on what LMs' people management discretionary "leadership behaviours" might entail as the focus of the study was HRM practice enactment. Purcell & Hutchinson (2007:16) have suggested that LMX theory would be a useful framework for exploring the effect of "leadership behaviours" on FLEs, something done by Alfes et al. (2013a) as LMX theory offers a way of exploring the dyad between LM and FLE, viewed in the literature as the current model by which an HRM practice is perceived by

an FLE, as illustrated in Wright & Nishii's model of HRM practice implementation in Figure 7.

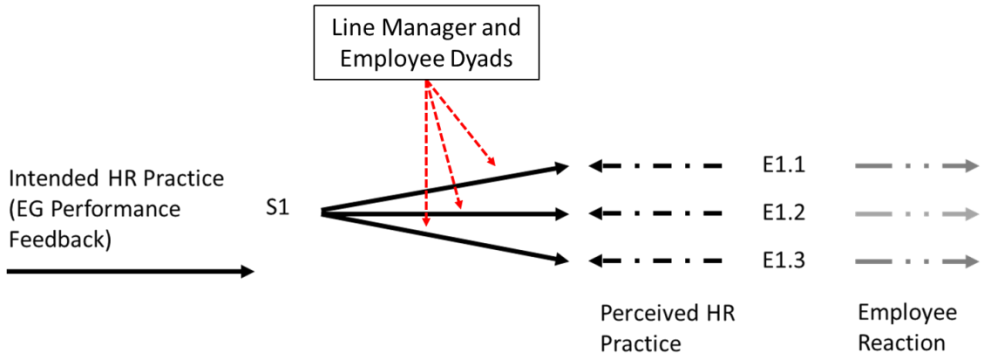

Figure 7 Dyadic Model of LM and FLE (Wright & Nishii, 2013)

However, Alfes et al. (2013a) can tell us that measurable effects are happening to FLEs but this study cannot tell us how measurable effects on FLEs are occurring and therefore does not help us understand what LMs' people management discretionary "leadership behaviours" might be. It is also worth noting that LMX theory was not developed to explore LM discretion and employee dyads within a people management context where LMs have multiple complex responsibilities (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Hales, 2005).

As outlined by Truss (2001:1146) "What this study has shown is that the concept of agency also needs to be considered", which in this case means it is clear from the literature that LMs' people management discretion needs to be better understood and it is claimed that there is a gap in the literature on how LMs use their people management discretion to influence FLE performance outcomes, which has importance for the literature and for those in practice, and also requires further research, possibly using an approach similar to that of Purcell et al. (2003), Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007) and Harney & Jordan (2008) to examine the variation between LM enactment, not just deviation from the espoused intention of that enactment (Wright & Nishii, 2007) in order to examine LM approaches to people management discretion. The approach of Truss (2001), where an actual outcome is explored to understand how it arose to add further insight and drawing on Bos-Nehles et al.'s (2013) approach, examines LMs and their FLEs to explore their views to understand the effects; particularly given that it is LMs' discretionary ability to combine their HRM responsibilities with their FLE performance responsibilities which is currently understood to indicate when LMs are

more likely to achieve better FLE performance outcomes (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013), rather than their discretionary desire, motivation, the operational constraints they face or their provision of opportunity for their FLEs (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013).

Paauwe et al. (2013) warn that no set list of HRM practices exists, and Hales (2005) illustrates that LMs have a mix of responsibilities, therefore Truss' (2001) approach of exploring what was done and how it is pertinent also addresses the alleged 'methodological gap' in the research inside the 'black box' (Paauwe et al., 2013; Harley, 2015; Boxall et al., 2016) by applying a more exploratory approach than has been conducted thus far and examining different phenomena as identified above. There is also a value for practice in such an approach, as much of the literature identifies more training for LMs as the key solution that needed to make them more effective in enacting their HRM practices (McGovern et al., 1997; Cunningham et al., 2004; Hope-Hailey et al., 2005; Nehles et al., 2006; Wright & Nishii, 2007; Guest and Bos-Nehles, 2013). However, though LMs' people management ability is highlighted as important (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013) and supports calls for greater LM training (Farndale & Kelliher, 2013), this may have a limited impact without a better understanding of 'how' they are currently using their people management discretion. While the work of Nehles et al. (2006) helped categorise the five categories of challenges which LMs deal with when conducting their people management discretion, there remains a lack of clarity within the literature on how LMs simultaneously manage these challenges while influencing FLE performance outcomes.

To understand how this influence might be happening in practice Bos-Nehles et al. (2013) took the five known barriers outlined and mapped these onto the AMO framework and sought LMs' and their immediate reports' perspectives on how they used their discretion in these areas coupled with them rating themselves on indicators of FLE performance. They suggest from the findings that that LM ability for the way they used their people management discretion to enact their HRM practice responsibilities had the strongest relationship with FLE performance predictors (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013). This is used to suggest FLEs perceiving LMs' discretionary people management ability is important in how LMs' people management discretion might be creating this effect alongside their enactment of HRM practices (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013). Further, it

does not show how they are combining their HRM responsibilities with their other FLE performance responsibilities. This challenge in understanding the 'how' of LMs' people management discretion was first identified by Truss (2001:1146) who said that "we cannot consider how HRM and performance are linked without analysing, in some detail, how policy is translated into practice through the lens of the informal organization." Going further, Truss (2001:1146) called for a disaggregated view of understanding FLE performance by comparing and contrasting at various levels in order to work within the complexities of organisations. This is because while LMs and their people management discretion may be a significant influence on FLEs and their performance outcomes, they do not influence FLEs in isolation, as other environmental factors will influence FLEs as well, such as HRM practices that exist in the workplace and for which LMs have little or no responsibility, other managers, and the culture and environment of the organisation in general.

Finally, AMO theory provides a method for examining actual FLE level performance outcomes but no study has yet utilised it to explain actual FLE performance outcomes. Those that have utilised it (Purcell et al., 2003; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Boxall & Purcell, 2008) did so at a department level (Purcell et al., 2003; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007) and not at an individual level, using indicators of how LMs interacted and not explanatory or exploratory qualitative interviews. Therefore these studies cannot explain how LMs are using their people management discretion or how this is affecting FLEs at an individual level. Taken together in entirety, this suggests exploratory methods are required in addition to those already being used by researchers in this field to understand how LMs are using their people management discretion to influence FLEs.

2.5 LMs' People Management Discretion Literature Gaps

There have been two decades of research into the 'black box' to understand the linkage between HRM systems and organisational performance, yet while the consensus view is supportive of an association between HRM systems and organisational performance "the reviews reveal different levels of confidence about the strength of the association, about the quality of the research on which it is based and about the practical conclusions we can draw from it about the impact of HRM" (Boselie et al., 2005; Paauwe et al., 2013:4). It is within this debate that this study is positioned. Yet this is still an area with

a valuable contribution to academic theory but also a "highly practical issue" with "major implications for policy and practice" in organisations (Paauwe et al., 2013:204). This means addressing many of the outstanding questions is important but obviously beyond the scope of this study. However, there are a number of gaps in the literature regarding the ways this takes place, especially at the FLE level, as most of the research has taken place "focused on the standpoint of the firm" (Paauwe et al., 2013:5), which will now be addressed in order of relevance and importance to the research problem, namely the lack of understanding on how LMs use their people management discretion to influence FLE level performance.

The primary gap relevant to the research problem is that related to the four aspects of LMs' discretion within the 'people and performance' model: implement, enact, lead and control to FLE level performance outcomes. As LMs' people management discretion is 'crucial' within the HRM-P practice espoused and enacted 'black box', there is a need for research into how LMs use their people management discretion when enacting HRM practices alongside their other responsibilities. Understanding more about this is important as LMs' people management discretion affects how FLEs behave and perform (Purcell et al., 2003; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Hutchinson & Purcell, 2010; Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Guest & Bos-Nehles, 2013; Wright & Nishii, 2013; Harley, 2015).

The prevailing view in the literature for some was that LMs' discretion results in a deviation from the intention of the HRM practice which then acts as a barrier to the HRM practice achieving what it was intended to do (McGovern et al., 1997; Truss, 2001; Renwick, 2003; Hope-Hailey et al., 2005; Nehles et al., 2006; Watson et al., 2007; Guest, 2011; Wright & Nishii, 2013) ultimately "resulting in the practice either being implemented poorly or not at all" (Farndale & Kelliher, 2013). That deviation from the espoused intention during enactment is therefore assumed to diminish the effectiveness of the HRM system (McGovern et al., 1997; Truss, 2001; Hope-Hailey et al., 2005; Nehles et al., 2006; Nishii & Wright, 2007; Wright & Nishii, 2007). Though Purcell et al. (2003), Boxall & Purcell (2008) and Harney & Jordan (2008) have argued for some time that deviation from the espoused is not automatically associated with lower levels of performance, this has not been the case in the literature, where the

consensus view (Bos-Nehles, 2010; Bos-Nehles et al., 2013) demonstrated by Wright & Nishii (2007:27) remained that "HRM practices must be internally consistent" so that they "achieve maximum effect".

However, that view is changing, led by calls (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Guest & Bos-Nehles, 2013) for greater understanding of the part that LMs' people management discretion plays in influencing FLEs as part of the way an HRM system connects with FLE performance outcomes, because what constitutes an HRM practice appears connected to how it is experienced by FLEs. Helped by findings by Nehles et al. (2006), Purcell & Hutchinson (2007), Harney & Jordan (2008) and Bos-Nehles et al. (2013), the view of researchers towards LMs is beginning to shift slowly away from this long-standing consensus on LMs as being problematic (McGovern et al., 1997; Renwick, 2003). More recently, led by Guest & Bos-Nehles (2013:96), LMs are not described as always "unwilling or unable" therefore deviation during HRM practice enactment needs to be better understood; especially from the perspective of LMs and those who report to them. Bos-Nehles et al (2013) have already begun this work by examining, using AMO theory, the relationship between LM and FLE perceptions of LM performance indicators, the five known barriers to LM HRM practice implementation with AMO theory. Alfes et al. (2013b) have found a relationship between LMs' effects on FLE engagement during HRM practice implementation while Farndale & Kelliher (2013) have found a relationship between FLE commitment and HRM practice implementation.

All these studies suggest FLEs' perceptions of their LMs' people management discretion is creating an effect on FLEs and further research is needed to add to this in order to contribute to showing how LMs' people management discretion is generating these effects and influencing FLE performance outcomes. Guest (2011:10) summarises the current 'black box' debate by saying "we remain uncertain how to measure HRM practices and HRM implementation. We have made little progress in establishing ways to measure an HRM system". It is therefore not controversial to state that there remain a number of gaps in the literature on how LMs use the discretion they have for their combined people management responsibilities to influence FLE outcomes. Echoing

Guest & Bos-Nehles (2013) and Paauwe et al. (2013), there is a gap in our knowledge of the experience of LMs and FLEs regarding the enactment of HRM practices.

There is also a gap in our knowledge of what LMs' perspectives are, not just of the barriers or impediments to enacting HRM practice but how they carry out the HRM practices for which they have people management responsibilities. Bos-Nehles et al. (2013) and Guest & Bos-Nehles (2013) call for research in these areas to help contribute to our growing awareness that, rather than being problematic, LMs have a "major role to play in day to day implementation of HRM" (Guest & Bos-Nehles, 2013:96). The 'people and performance' model has advanced our understanding of the LM interface, but while it identifies LMs' people management discretion, beyond what types of qualities aspects of that discretion are likely to have, implement, enact, lead and control, it cannot tell us how it is influencing individual FLE performance and further research is therefore needed to explain this. Finally what research has taken place, utilising actual performance data, has been done at the organisational (Truss, 2001) or departmental level (Purcell et al., 2003; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007), meaning that a gap exists in understanding the effect of LMs' discretion at the individual FLE level using known performance outcomes.

To address this gap, research would be needed on LMs and their use of their people management discretion, in a context where the LM has a significant financial responsibility for the business unit in which they operate and manages staff who are no more senior than 'supervisory', matching the findings of Hales (2005) on the changing nature of what LMs have responsibility for and therefore how they operate in the use of their people management discretion. Therefore research in this area would address these gaps and would answer the call a decade ago by Purcell & Kinnie (2006) for more studies that include the FLE in the HRM-performance chain and the more recent, similar call from Bos-Nehles et al (2013) and Guest & Bos-Nehles (2013) for more studies that include LMs in the HRM-performance chain. This would help make a small contribution and also answer the call by Guest (1997) for a 'theory linking HRM to performance' at the level of the FLE. Therefore this literature is offered as evidence that a study is required using the 'people and performance' model to address this gap.

There were also other gaps within the literature which are not as closely related to the research problem but still have some relevance to it. Firstly, there is a gap in the literature on how LMs implement and enact the HRM practices for which they have people management responsibility, how this is done alongside the other responsibilities they have, how this is undertaken within the environmental barriers they face and how this is experienced by them while explaining actual FLE performance outcomes. Guest & Bos-Nehles (2013:95) describe this area as "seriously under researched", in particular how practices are turned from espoused to enacted HRM practices. They explore the problem of variation of approach highlighted by Wright & Nishii (2007) by examining the discretion of LMs, how they enact HRM practices the way they do and where the influences have come from that would explain that enactment. Secondly, while 'best practice' and 'best fit' are debated within the literature, they are also subject to tension in practice when the HRM practices are not supportive of the organisational intentions (Purcell, 1999; Purcell et al., 2003; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Becker et al., 2009; Paauwe et al., 2013). Finally a gap also exists within this literature at the level of the application of HRM practices; in short, the LM and FLE level of how this is experienced when the performance aims are being pursued are out of alignment (Paauwe et al., 2013) with the HRM practice. However, while pertinent to the research problem, the primary gap outlined previously remains the focus and remit of this study.

2.5.1 Methodological Gaps within the Literature

There have been increasingly vocal calls questioning the methodological approaches used in this field by Boselie et al. (2005) then Boselie (2009), Wright & Haggerty (2005), Purcell & Boxall (2008) and Paauwe (2009). Fleetwood & Hesketh (2006) described an overt use of positivist methodology leading to "the professional HRM literature is currently awash with articles dedicated to measuring and reporting upon, the alleged measurable link between an organisation's HRM practices and its performance" and a field that has seen little progress despite two decades of research. Alvesson & Sandberg (2011) and Alvesson & Gabriel (2013) continue the criticism by adding that the continued use of positivist methodology is propagating a lack of challenge of what may be erroneous underlying assumptions which are eroding contributors and their

search for knowledge. Paauwe et al. (2013) echo these criticisms and call for further research that will provide contributions to the conceptual models used to understand the HRM system and which are then used to create statistical connections between the HRM system and the organisation. Harley (2015) sounds a warning that these cautionary voices are being ignored and that instead the field is narrowing further. He stresses that this is not solely an academic problem but one that "leads to uncritical and managerialist [sic] assumptions about significant workplace phenomena". This suggests that he sees this as a concern for practitioners as well as for academics. He joins others (Hesketh & Fleetwood, 2006) in making the case for greater methodological pluralism, particularly away from the dominance of the 'social psychology' model and conceptual approach leading to a dogmatic over-use of quantitative statistical significance as a methodological approach relative to other approaches that may be more relevant and pertinent for the type of research questions being asked (Harley, 2015:404).

These methodological gaps within this literature will be heeded when considering the approaches selected for this study. What does this mean in practice? It will be a study that is open to 'methodological pluralism' (Harley, 2015) meaning that it does not automatically involve a pre-existing framework which is then 'tested', rather the phenomena will be examined using a qualitative exploratory approach that further research can test, refine or falsify (Popper, 1994). This is argued to be a conscious choice to remain open to the appropriate methodological approach based on this methodological gap within the extant literature.

2.6 Research Questions

There are therefore a number of gaps in the literature on how LMs' use of discretion influences FLE performance outcomes, especially from studies where multi-level and multi-stakeholder perspectives are sought (Wright & Nishii, 2013:110). The primary research gap involves understanding the LM discretion that comprises the people management "leadership behaviours" alluded to but not defined by Purcell & Hutchinson (2007:3) but which combine HRM practice responsibilities and FLE performance responsibilities, which are known to influence individual FLE performance outcomes. An empirical study relies on one or more research questions to guide the enquiry and provide focus (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Partington, 2002). As

recommended, the research question was refined and developed to provide focus to the main study. The primary research question I propose is:

How do LMs use their people management discretion to influence individual first line employee performance outcomes?

To help address this gap, while also addressing the gaps on how LMs implement and enact HRM practices alongside their other responsibilities for FLE performance, I propose the sub research question:

How do LMs use their people management discretion when enacting HRM practices?

To address these gaps in the literature I chose to undertake an empirical study to address the lack of understanding on how LMs use their people management discretion to influence FLE level performance. As well as addressing the gaps in the literature, this also has the aim of providing insights or approaches for the HRM-P debate and provide insight that will allow me to provide practical guidance both for LMs and HRM professionals to use to develop their own practice in order to achieve greater harmonisation between them in the pursuit of common goals.

2.7 Summary of Literature Review Chapter

This chapter presented the findings on the literature conducted using a Systematic Review to address the research problem. The Systematic Review identified the relevant literature and a methodical review of the themes within this literature was carried out. From this a number of literature and methodological gaps were ascertained and defined. Research questions to address these gaps in service of the overarching research problem were developed. The next chapter (Chapter 3) involves the methodological choices and approach taken to develop a study to address these gaps.

3 Methodology

This chapter documents my choices and methods to develop a study that answers the research questions. My rationale, intended to be transparent so others can understand, will evaluate and ultimately form a judgement on what has been carried out and any subsequent claims that are made (Partington, 2002; Easterby-Smith et al., 2006; Blaikie, 2007; Buchanan & Bryman, 2009) are outlined in the two sections that make up this chapter. The first section addresses four decisions made to develop the empirical inquiry: the selection of a critical realist approach and why this was adopted as a philosophical approach; the type of research question being asked and the methodological fit between it and the current literature; the purpose of the study as a DBA empirical study for the aims that it has; and finally the research design arrived at and a rationale for choosing a qualitative case study and decisions made turning this into a working study. The second section addresses two stages in carrying out the empirical study: how the fieldwork that was undertaken was managed and how the data analysis was carried out.

3.1 Part One – Planning the Empirical Study

3.1.1 Theoretical Perspective

Partington (2002) highlights four fundamental decisions necessary when designing an empirical study which increase the likelihood that it will reach a successful conclusion; these are illustrated in Figure 8.

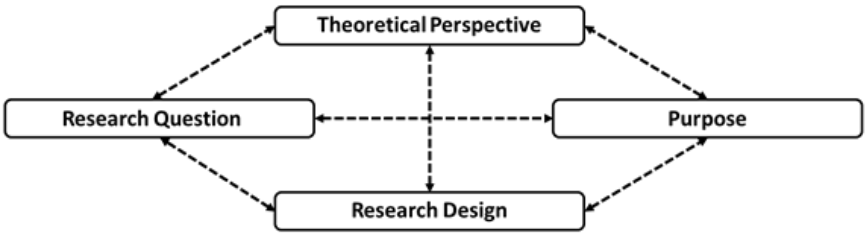

Figure 8 The Research Design Process (Partington, 2002)

Firstly this involved my reflecting on the nature of reality, what it is, how it exists and how I and the study aligned with it: a choice of ontology. The second, how knowledge can therefore be known, accessed and understood: a choice of epistemology that Creswell (2009) calls the "basic set of beliefs that guide action". These choices also

included reflection, often through discussion, on the beliefs, the worldview, values, personality and mindset of myself as a researcher, as we all carry within us a number of implicit assumptions which influence the understanding we develop, the choices we make and the actions we undertake (Dennett & Westbury, 2000; Easterby-Smith et al., 2006; Blaikie, 2007:13; Kahneman, 2011; Bryman, 2012), so I better understood my own answer to Blaikie's (2007:13) question: "What is the nature of social reality?"

3.1.1.1 Ontological Positions

Ontological positions concerning the nature of reality are typically categorised into two perspectives: realist and idealist (Blaikie, 2007). The former is based on a dichotomous underlying assumption that the world exists independently of our thoughts (Blaikie, 2007:13) while the latter is based on the underlying assumption that the external world is the product of the construction of our thoughts and cannot exist beyond this. For a realist, or positivist, objects such as 'organisations' and within it the structure, 'culture' and 'systems' are assumed to exist and act, mostly independently of observers or the individual actors who carry these out (Chia, 2002), making them relatively straightforward to access for analysis purposes. By contrast, for an idealist, or interpretivist, the same objects are created solely from the viewpoint of individuals who work within them, making them very difficult to access for analysis purposes (Easterby-Smith et al., 2006; Blaikie, 2007).

3.1.1.2 Researcher's Ontological Position

My personal worldview is less dichotomous than these two extremes: I acknowledge that there are "different ways of perceiving and making sense of the external world" (Blaikie, 2007:17) but do not accept that there is no external world or that it has no relevance beyond our perception of it (Blaikie, 2007:16) which made adopting an idealist position inappropriate for me. As I also acknowledge that organisations are 'fuzzy, ambiguous, complex socially constructed systems' (Denyer et al., 2008: 408), rarely in a 'single state' and constantly changing (Easterby-Smith et al., 2006), which I attribute to the presence of human agency and human ascribed meaning which formulate social systems, I class organisations as far too complex and open to allow for a robust and discernible manifestation of cause-and-effect relationships (Sayer, 2000). For me these two extreme philosophical perspectives meant that a realist approach was

over-deterministic and ignored human cognition and agency, while idealism offered insufficient acknowledgement of emergent social structures (Danermark et al., 2006; Cassell & Symon, 2012; Edwards et al., 2014). Therefore I adopted the perspective of critical realist which accepts an external reality and human interpretation of that reality as being complementary expressions of the same underlying reality. This informed my approach to designing and undertaking the empirical study presented in this thesis on how LMs have used their people management discretion to influence individual FLE performance outcomes (Bhaskar, 1998; Danermark et al., 2006; Edwards et al. 2014).

3.1.1.3 Critical Realism

Critical realism makes a conscious compromise between the extreme positions of realism and idealism, and recognises that social conditions exist and have "real consequences" whether or not they are observed and labelled by social scientists. However, critical realism also recognises that our appreciation of the world and the concepts that we use to define it are human constructions (Easterby-Smith et al., 2006:33), that reality exists independently of our knowledge of it (Danermark et al., 2006:17) and in order to fully understand social reality it has to be both socially produced and socially defined (Danermark et al., 2006:16). Critical realism claims reality exists in different domains: the empirical, the actual and the real (Bhaskar, 1998). These are outlined in Table 3.

Table 3 The Three Domains of Critical Realism – Adapted from Bhaskar, 1998

	Domain of Empirical	Domain of Actual	Domain of Real
Experiences	Experiences involving, or events observed by, Line Managers or employees that is understood to have had an influence on employee performance outcomes		
Events		Actual events which are understood to have had an influence on employees or on how Line Managers have used their discretion to have an influence on employees, whether observed or not	
Generative Mechanisms			The underlying, often hidden causal tendencies or generative mechanisms which may in a given situation give rise to events. They may also lie dormant being cancelled out by other forces. These are the ultimate cause s of the influence Line Managers have on employee performance

The empirical domain consists of what we experience either directly or indirectly, such as the effect that LMs' behaviours have on the FLEs who work within their team. This is separate from the actual domain where events happen whether we experience them or not, such as the LM agreeing with another LM that they will co-operate with each other so that in turn their FLEs can benefit from more harmonious working relationships and conditions in the future. This event happened, whether the FLEs experienced it or not, though they may subsequently be affected by its having taken place. The experience and event domain are both separated from the real domain, which consists of structures of objects, both physical and social, which have the capacity to act as generative mechanisms (Danermark et al., 2006:20). Described by Danermark et al. (2006:206) as the 'structures, powers and capacities' which explain the causality that 'makes something happen in the world', generative mechanisms may or may not trigger, or through the agency of actors, trigger events in the domain of the empirical domain or the actual domain. In this way Bhaskar (1998) ascribes causal power to human agency, in the way they interact with generative mechanisms which include physical actions or activities as well as intangible influences on outcomes such as motivations or beliefs (Blaikie, 2007:89). Generative mechanisms are therefore the structural elements which make outcomes come about, whether triggered by human agency or not (Bhaskar, 1998; Fleetwood & Ackroyd, 2004; Danermark et al., 2006; Buchanan & Bryman, 2009:432; Edwards et al., 2014).

Therefore completing the example just given, if the LMs have agreed to co-operate with each other so that in turn their FLEs can benefit from more harmonious working relationships and conditions in the future, then the actions or interventions they subsequently make may trigger a number of generative mechanisms which will be the "external or internal forces or stimuli which, provided they or their effects are attended to may lead to a purposeful response" (Partington, 2002:141). In this example these may have a causal influence on the human agency involved in harmonious working relationships. They may undertake a number of actions of agency which invoke mechanisms such as holding joint meetings, building relationships and so on. These may lead to better relationships between the FLEs as intended, but this may be the result of mechanisms that have been triggered and which have causal power, but which the actors involved, the LMs and their respective FLEs may have no knowledge of or

understanding. For example the organisation may have already created new incentives in harmonious team working, organised training in the skills involved and deliberately constructed teams in terms of geographical location to make this more likely, while the FLEs may be more amenable to such working due to their personalities and beliefs. Or the opposite of the above may be the case. The LMs have a causal influence on the outcome of harmonious working, or not, through their agency, but in the complex social structure that is an organisation this involves more than just the direct actions of the LMs and also involves the invoking of generative mechanisms that explain how this outcome is, or is not, achieved.

3.1.1.4 Epistemological Choice of the Researcher

The ontological position of a researcher will influence how they undertake any investigation into their perspective of reality while epistemology is "how human beings come to have knowledge of the world around them, (however this is regarded) and how we know what we know" (Blaikie, 2007:18). Those who advocate that reality is of an idealist nature are generally referred to as interpretivist or social constructivist (Easterby-Smith et al., 2006; Blaikie, 2007). Those who advocate that reality is of a realist nature are generally referred to as positivist or relativist (Easterby-Smith et al., 2006; Blaikie, 2007).

By contrast and as explained above, critical realism is connected neither to positivist nor to interpretivist approaches, but instead is epistemologically relative, meaning it approaches an inquiry with whatever epistemology is the most appropriate for the phenomena being studied (Danermark et al., 2006; Easterby-Smith et al., 2006; Blaikie, 2007; Edwards et al., 2014). Truss (2001:1146) suggests that "we cannot consider how HRM and performance are linked without analysing, in some detail, how policy is translated into practice through the lens of the informal organization". So, considering this from my adopted critical realist perspective, it was decided if this was the nature of the reality of those within my study, then to understand how LMs used their people management discretion to influence individual FLE performance outcomes would need to encompass consideration of the agency of LMs and FLEs but also the 'structures, powers and capacities' that help understand and explain the causality involved in the achievement of their actions. This is because the study is interested primarily in the

discretion of the LMs, but will need to recognise this needs to be understood within the context of people management, i.e. the responsibilities LMs have for both HRM responsibilities and FLE performance outcomes. Therefore to explain how the agency of LM discretion influenced individual FLE performance outcomes means that as well as seeking to understand how the agency of LMs influenced FLEs in the empirical and actual domains, I understood that there would also need to be an understanding of the 'structures, powers and capacities' in the real domain so that the generative mechanisms that LM agency triggered. In addition a need to understand how this in turn influenced the agency of their FLEs in the domains of the actual and empirical was also understood as being required from the study.

While understanding at a theoretical and abstract level what a generative mechanism is, is relatively straightforward; at a practical methodological level, uncovering these is both difficult and challenging (Partington, 2000, 2002; Danermark et al., 2006; Denyer et al., 2008; Buchanan & Bryman, 2009; Bygstad & Munkvold, 2011:4; Edwards et al., 2014). Firstly, I, as the researcher, may give the impression that the focus of the study has wandered from understanding how LM discretion has influenced FLE performance outcomes to something more abstract. For clarity, my intention in the choices I have made and the actions subsequently carried out is to explain how individual LM discretion in a people management context through the use of generative mechanisms influenced individual FLE performance outcomes. Secondly, I, as the researcher, may give the impression that they are seeking to demonstrate a linear causal relationship which produces the same outcome every time it is triggered. Again for clarity, my understanding is that because a generative mechanism is dependent on other mechanisms and is therefore contextually bound, and that contingent causality is inherent in all open systems, the structures, powers, capacities and generative mechanisms that exist within them. Which means my aim is to explain phenomena but not through this study attempt to predict them (Smith, 2010), instead recognising that the outputs can only be exploratory or explanatory but not predictive (Danermark et al., 2006; Blaikie, 2007; Buchanan & Bryman, 2009). It also means that in the production of a theory about what generative mechanisms are being triggered by LMs, I need to be clear and outline what steps were taken to arrive at the propositions presented at the conclusion of this thesis.

Finally, as highlighted by Blaikie (2007:111) "social actors may have little or no awareness of the mechanisms and in particular the structures, which are involved in the production of the regularities in their social activities" which means that a critical realist approach requires an interpretivist approach to the inquiry, both when gathering data and when conducting their analysis (Danermark et al., 2006). This places a responsibility on me, as a researcher, to 'acknowledge my involvement' and 'account for this', especially around the research design decisions and data interpretations which were made (James & Vinnicombe, 2002:84). My interpretation of how to deal with this was to accept that my own preferences and views would influence, often unconsciously, choices throughout the study and place trust in my supervisor and my panel to act as guides on the choices I was making.

3.1.2 Research Question

The research question was refined and developed which happened continuously over time, as my understanding of the subject of the area of inquiry developed and the nature of the study was refined and adjusted in line with the development of my appreciation of methodological choices.

Though the question was refined, the core aim of the study remained consistent: explaining the relationship between the managerial discretion of LMs, who manage FLEs and hold responsibilities for HRM responsibilities as well as responsibilities for FLE performance outcomes, resulting in the primary question: *How do LMs use their people management discretion to influence individual first line employee performance outcomes?* To support the primary question and address the gap in how LMs implement and enact HRM practices alongside their other responsibilities for FLE performance, I proposed the sub research question: *How do LMs use their people management discretion when enacting HRM practices?*

3.1.2.1 Consideration of Predominance of Positivism in HRM and Performance Literature when Interpreting the Research Question

The research question emerged from a Systematic Review of the literature, where it was found that the majority of the literature which covered the HRM and performance debate was found to have taken a positivist epistemological approach (Boselie & Paauwe, 2005; Paauwe et al., 2013; Harley, 2015; Boxall et al., 2016). Harley (2015)

and Boxall et al. (2016) have recently been critical of the predominance of these methods, but this has been an approach challenged a decade earlier by Boselie et al., (2005), Paauwe & Boselie (2005b), Wright et al. (2005), Wright and Haggerty (2005) and others (Paauwe et al., 2013).

One way of interpreting this predominance of methodological approaches is to argue it suggests those carrying out this research have "assumed that there is a reality which exists independently of the observer, and hence the job of the scientist is merely to identify, albeit with increasing difficulty, this pre-existing reality" (Easterby-Smith et al., 2006:34). If this interpretation is made, then it follows that a consequence of this is that researchers "move too soon towards testing the statistical significance of relationships between conceptual variables in theoretically based arguments" (Partington, 2000:92). And this appears to be the view that some, who argue that the HRM and performance literature has become "awash with articles dedicated to measuring and reporting upon the alleged measurable link between an organisation's HRM practices and its performance" (Fleetwood & Hesketh, 2006:1977), have and why in their view this "narrowing the field of inquiry" (Harley, 2015) has taken place. As a result there are calls to examine what has been understood in new and different ways (Harley, 2015; Boxall et al., 2016).

However while the literature is the appropriate and proper place for this healthy debate to progress, this study is not viewed as a deliberate philosophical shift away from that taken previously in the literature in order to answer that call and bring a different insight to the debate, but is focused on an aspect of the 'black box' gap in the literature and not how this has arisen systemically. The literature has provided evidence that HRM systems, HRM practices, LMs, FLEs and FLE performance outcomes, were entities which existed in organisations (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004; Boselie et al., 2005; Fleetwood & Hesketh, 2006, 2008), but within the evidence overall there remained a lack of understanding existing in how, within these entities, LMs use their people management discretion to influence individual FLE performance outcomes (Purcell et al., 2003; Bowen & Ostroff, 2004; Fleetwood & Hesketh, 2006; Boselie et al., 2005; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Paauwe, 2009; Brewster et al., 2013;

Paauwe et al., 2013; Harley, 2015; Boxall et al., 2016) and this study has been designed to address specific aspects of this gap.

Though not a deliberate philosophical step away from the predominant stance of related literature, this study will be a methodological shift away from the predominant methods used in the extant literature, leading to two conscious choices. Firstly HRM practices will be examined from the perspective of how LMs use these in concert with the other responsibilities they have for FLE performance and the study will be designed to allow this to emerge from the study, answering the call for more exploratory research in this area, rather than taking into the study a predetermined list of HRM practices and testing associations with FLE performance outcomes or other measures; these will be allowed to emerge from within the context of the study. Secondly the study will deliberately focus on the LM and FLE dyad so that individual FLE performance outcomes can be related to the discretion used by the FLE's LM. This was viewed as, being cognisant of the literature and the debates within, philosophically and epistemologically the most appropriate way to address the main research question: *How do LMs use their people management discretion to influence individual first line employee performance outcomes?*

3.1.3 Research Purpose

The purpose of this empirical study is to address the research question and is being conducted as part of an Executive DBA thesis, which means at a personal level for me as a researcher there is the responsibility to develop a contribution to knowledge, represented by the academic literature, by conducting an empirical study and producing a doctoral thesis to document the study and findings, and an additional responsibility alongside that to produce a contribution to academic knowledge which is to also produce a contribution through new knowledge and its impact on practice. This is understood by me to mean that a DBA ought to have significance beyond the academic literature.

To meet this requirement, a decision was made to formulate the final output in the contribution to practice in the form of a design proposition (Romme, 2003), defined here as "a way of presenting knowledge linking interventions to outcomes" which is intended to help those in organisations understand why the outcomes they witness are

coming about so that they can make choices on how they should intervene so that they can influence deliberately "how should things be?" (Denyer et al., 2008:394). A design proposition will be presented based on context, intervention, mechanism, outcome, logic (CIMO-logic). CIMO-logic follows the logical construction that causation, in a particular class of problematic contexts, arises through the use of an identified intervention type(s) which will invoke generative mechanisms which will deliver defined outcomes (Denyer et al., 2008:396). This is intended to provide practitioners, particularly those in Ochre Inc., a "template for the creation of solutions for a particular class of field problems" (Denyer et al., 2008:395). Here that means understanding how LMs are influencing FLE outcomes so that they can determine courses of action through which to influence. This is referred to by Denyer et al. (2008) and Rousseau (2012) as 'CIMO-logic' which is a way of separating out the constituent parts of a causal mechanism in an organisational context. CIMO-logic allows for the typical complexity found in organisations when developing and understanding how and why outcomes have been achieved. Therefore in order to satisfy the second responsibility of a DBA, to produce a contribution to practice, the outputs of the study will be presented in this way using CIMO-logic. An example of CIMO-logic is given by Denyer et al. (2008) to illustrate this in practice: a team leader in the way they have managed a team meeting (the context) being influenced by reading a specific manual (the intervention) on how to structure the meeting and altering their approach (the mechanism) as a result of this, altering the outcomes that result (the outcome) (Denyer et al., 2008). The components of design propositions using CIMO-logic are outlined in Table 4.

Table 4 Design Proposition Using CIMO-logic (Denyer et al., 2008)

Component	Explanation
Context	The surrounding (external and internal environment) factors and the nature of the human actors that influence behavioural change. They include features such as age, experience, competency, organisational politics and power, the nature of the technical system, organisational stability, uncertainty and system interdependencies. Interventions are always embedded in a social system and, as noted by Pawson and Tilley (1997), will be affected by at least four contextual layers: the individual, the interpersonal relationships, institutional setting and the wider infrastructural system.
Interventions	The interventions managers have at their disposal to influence behaviour. For example, leadership style, planning and control systems, training, performance management. It is important to note that it is necessary to examine not just the nature of the intervention but also how it is implemented. Furthermore, interventions carry with them hypotheses, which may or may not be shared. For example, 'financial incentives will lead to higher worker motivation'.
Mechanisms	The [generative] mechanism that in a certain context is triggered by the intervention. For instance, empowerment offers employees the means to contribute to some activity beyond their normal tasks or outside their normal sphere of interest, which then prompts participation and responsibility, offering the potential of long-term benefits to them and/or to their organisation.
Outcomes	The outcome of the intervention in its various aspects, such as performance improvement, cost reduction or low error rates.

A design proposition outcome of this sort will therefore be produced with the intention of delivering two contributions. The first is a contribution to academic theory, namely, in particular a contribution to the HRM and performance 'black box' literature, which Denyer et al. (2008) describe as *theora*. The second will be a contribution to practice, of which there will be a 'techne' contribution, which is a contribution for organisational practice at a systemic level (Denyer et al., 2008:394; Rousseau, 2012) that will "contain information on what to do, in which situations to produce what effect and offer some understanding of why this happens" (Denyer et al., 2008:396).

This approach comes with two important considerations. The first is that a generative mechanism may produce a differing outcome in one context while in another may produce nothing at all or a completely different outcome. This contingent causality is

inherent in all open systems, and warns us that we can mainly use mechanisms to explain phenomena, but not to predict them (Danermark et al., 2006; Blaikie, 2007; Rousseau, 2012; Van Aken and Berends, 2012). Therefore the findings will be context-specific and explanatory but not predictive. Secondly, design propositions require testing for pragmatic validity. This is likely to be in the form of further quantitative testing to disprove, validate or develop further the design proposition (Denyer et al., 2008:395; Rousseau, 2012; Van Aken and Berends, 2012), although further testing for pragmatic validity will be expected to lead to additional contributions for 'theora', namely academic theory, 'techne', and 'praxis'. This further activity, if sustained following the doctoral process by the researcher, can help contribute towards the practice of a continued cycle of theory building and theory testing (Christensen & Carlile, 2009; Rousseau, 2012; Van Aken and Berends, 2012).

3.1.4 Research Design

"A fully developed research design will embody the researcher's purpose, questions, and theoretical framework" (Partington, 2002:142). As Easterby-Smith et al. (2006:43) state, the choice I faced with my research design was "about organising research activity, including the collection of data, in ways that are most likely to achieve the research aims". The rationale I used to design the study is now explained.

3.1.4.1 Methodological Fit

The first consideration I made was the context of existing knowledge within the literature domains of interest. Described by Edmondson & McManus (2007) as examining the 'Methodological Fit', they suggest that research design should be informed by the extent of existing knowledge and theory in any given field of inquiry. Edmondson & McManus (2007) outline three types of literature domain: nascent, an area which is new and where little is known; intermediate, an area where many studies have taken place but there is still a lack of theory; or mature, an area where a large amount is known with high amounts of extant theory already in place. It is important to note that this model was used only as a guide and not as rules, and helped provide guidance for some decisions on data gathering approaches. The overarching framework is shown in Table 5.

Table 5 Archetypes of Methodological Fit (Edmondson & McManus, 2007)

State of Prior Theory and Research	Nascent	Intermediate	Mature
Research Questions	Open-ended inquiry about a phenomenon of interest	Proposed relationships between new and established constructs	Focused questions and/or hypotheses relating to existing constructs
Type of data collected	Qualitative, initially open-ended data that need to be interpreted for meaning	Hybrid (both qualitative and quantitative)	Quantitative data; focused measures where extent or amount is meaningful
Illustrative methods for collecting data	Interviews; observations; obtaining documents or other material from field sites relevant to the phenomena of interest	Interviews; observations; surveys; obtaining material from field sites relevant to the phenomena of interest	Surveys; interviews or observations designed to be systematically coded and quantified; obtaining data from field sites that measure the extent or amount of salient constructs
Constructs and measures	Typically new constructs, few formal measures	Typically one or more new constructs and/or new measures	Typically relying heavily on existing constructs and measures
Goal of data analyses	Pattern identification	Preliminary or exploratory testing of new propositions and/or new constructs	Formal hypothesis testing
Data analysis methods	Thematic content analysis coding for evidence of constructs	Content analysis, exploratory statistics, and preliminary tests	Statistical inference, standard statistical analyses
Theoretical Contribution	A suggestive theory, often an invitation for further work on the issue or set of issues opened up by the study	A provisional theory, often one that integrates previously separate bodies of work	A supported theory that may add specificity, new mechanisms, or new boundaries to existing theories

Using the model to reflect on the key debates within HRM and performance literature, this can be traced back to the mid-1990s (Huselid, 1995; Becker & Gerhart, 1996; Boselie et al., 2005; Paauwe et al., 2013) so it would appear initially that this is a 'mature' field of inquiry, making a hypothesis testing approach appropriate.

However, my own area of research, LM discretion in the context of people management responsibilities and how this influences individual FLE performance outcomes, is an under-researched area of the literature (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Paauwe et al., 2013) making it a nascent area and there have been many calls to look at the items inside the 'black box', especially to allow

findings to emerge from the actors rather than from the output of a theoretical proposition that is being tested (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Bos-Nehles, 2010; Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Harley, 2015). Therefore it was felt reasonable and legitimate to approach this study as nascent as the field, while overall having being debated for a long period of time, has become narrow in its form (Harley, 2015). Also the area of interest where this study was located has been researched far less (Brewster et al., 2013; Harley, 2015; Boxall et al., 2016) and is an area where a lack of theory exists and in which few studies have been conducted (Brewster et al., 2013).

3.1.4.2 Data and Analysis Approaches to Identify Generative Mechanisms

The aim of this study was to identify how LMs use their people management discretion to influence individual FLE performance outcomes, something Truss (2001:1146) actively calls for in the literature, saying "the concept of agency also needs to be considered". This is because generative mechanisms are of a context-dependent nature, which means that data are required from the study to allow abstraction through retroductive analysis of the agency or discretion of LMs and also the underlying structures which enable or constrain generative mechanisms (Bygstad & Munkvold, 2011).

By taking a critical realist ontological position, this was achieved through the identification of the 'structures, powers and capacities' which through the triggering of generative mechanisms explain the ways LMs influence individual FLE performance outcomes. To identify and understand what these structural factors are and how triggering generative mechanisms lead these to influence FLEs, required an approach which would include "abstract research" aimed at "theoretical description of mechanisms and structures", with consequences for the data required. This meant acquiring data from LMs to understand the choices and actions when using discretion in order to influence individual FLE performance outcomes, and data to understand the context of the 'structures, powers and capacities' within a people management context where they had both HRM and FLE performance outcome responsibilities, and which influences the discretion used. The first type of data was understood to be required as LMs' experiences could be used to inductively determine how they applied their discretion in the empirical and actual domains of reality. The second type of data was

thought necessary to theorise, through abstract methods, the structures, powers and capacities and the generative mechanisms of the real domain and will include environmental features such as organisational politics, culture, power, history, stability, uncertainty and systemic interdependencies (Pawson & Tilley, 1997; Denyer et al., 2008). This meant the same two types of data, on personal agency and discretion, and on the influences of structures, powers and capacities that were sought from LMs, were also sought from their direct FLEs. These data can be used to examine the experiences of the LMs and the FLEs in the study, determine the events and how they used their respective agency to achieve the known FLE performance outcome by working back from this and, through identification of phenomena, theoretically postulate mechanisms or structures that explain the evidence on the outcomes that have been produced (Buchanan & Bryman, 2009:438).

Denyer et al. (2008:408) add that when seeking to understand generative mechanisms "it is better to look at the same event or process in different settings" (Easterby-Smith et al., 2006:46; Denyer et al., 2008:408), therefore data from HRM business partners (HRMBPs) will also be sought in background interviews to provide data on the HRM system and practices within the case study setting as well as how in their view the system was translated into practice by LMs and FLEs. These findings will be shared using pseudonyms to protect individual identity and confidentiality.

The model in Figure 9, adapted from Sayer (1992) summarises conceptually this approach. This illustrates that the study required data on experiences and events concerned with LMs and FLEs, and how they interacted in a people management context and achieved known FLE performance outcomes. It also illustrates how the study required data on the powers, structures and capacities (Buchanan & Bryman, 2009), so that these could be identified and therefore assist in determining how they interacted with the agency of those in the study, LMs and FLEs, to influence individual FLE outcomes through generative mechanisms.

Finally data on job descriptions were sought following the exploratory interviews in order to further understand the organisational context and help explain LMs' influence on individual FLE outcomes within a people management context.

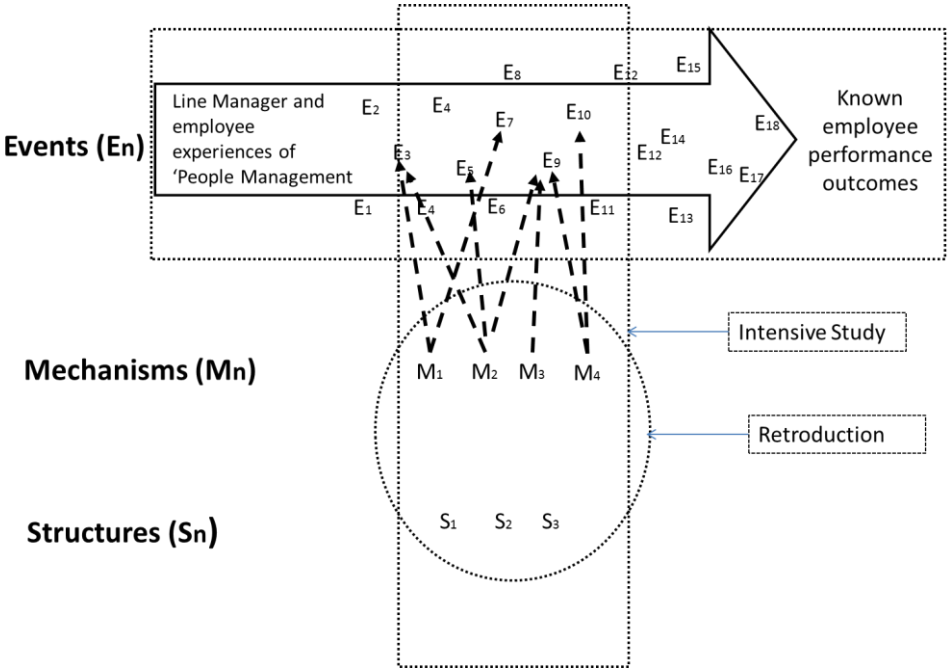

Figure 9 Layered Ontology of Critical Realism Applied to This Study (Adapted from Sayer, 1992)

Once the data had been gathered, the next step was to determine generative mechanisms which explain how the LMs influenced the FLE performance outcomes (Danermark et al., 2006; Blaikie, 2007). This meant firstly understanding the experiences of the LMs and FLEs, and how these related to each other in order to produce events. From this, the generative mechanisms, which created the 'structures, powers and capacities' (Buchanan & Bryman, 2009:432) could be theorised through abstraction to explain how in a people management context LMs influenced FLE performance outcomes (Danermark et al., 2006:206)? These data were then used in concert with data on the environment to retroductively ascertain the structures and generative mechanisms that explain how LMs used their discretion to influence FLE performance outcomes.

The 6-stage approach by Danermark et al. (2006:109) chosen to provide some structure to this process, was chosen because it provided a systematic, methodical and transparent process to guide the study and also provide some transparency on how findings were produced. This model illustrates how the reasoning and consideration of the data moves from concrete to abstraction, then back to concrete again, shown by the categorisations of the researcher's approach to considering the data on the left of the model. For this study, induction was initially used to understand the ways that FLEs achieve

performance outcomes and the ways that LMs have influenced these outcomes in the domain of the real and the actual. Abduction then helps explore how LMs used these actions to influence FLEs who were connected to the existing HRM system, FLE performance responsibilities or other structural influences which emerged from the data. Retroduction was then used to interpret how these combined together to create potential explanatory generative mechanisms. Comparing these with the accounts within the data, refining these models and how they explained the known FLE performance outcomes, could then take place. An adaptation of this applied model and that in the literature is illustrated in Figure 10.

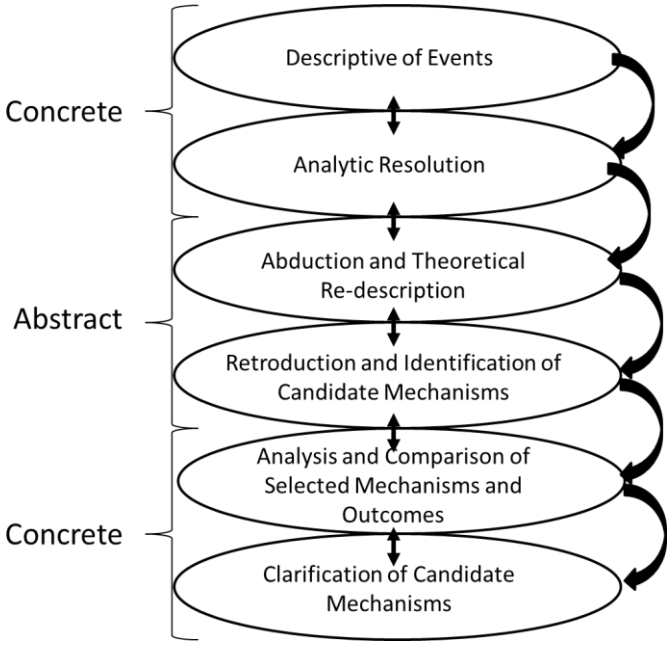

Figure 10 Systematic Model of Critical Realism Research (Adapted from Danermark et al., 2006)

Conscious of the responsibility this placed on me as a researcher and the potential for bias, this was dealt with by designing a methodical and systematic approach which started with the "description of the features, retroduction to possible causes, elimination of alternatives and identification of the generative mechanisms or causal structure at work" (Bhaskar, 1998:17). This was met by keeping clear records of how this understanding was developed, outlined during the second half of this chapter when data analysis is explained.

3.1.4.3 Design Proposition Implications

In order to satisfy the responsibility of a DBA researcher to produce a contribution to practice alongside a contribution to academic knowledge, the outputs of the study will be presented in this way using CIMO-logic.

Within this study the 'problematic context' is people management which means LMs having both HRM practice and FLE performance outcome responsibilities, though this acknowledges that the surrounding (external and internal environment) factors in the study will also influence the LMs and FLEs in the study. In the study, interventions are the collection of actions carried out by LMs using their discretion to influence FLE performance outcomes. Mechanisms are those which will be theorised in this study and which these interventions invoke or trigger, and which explain how the LMs' discretion has influenced FLEs and the performance outcomes they produce. Outcomes will be the known FLE performance outcomes.

In practice this could involve an LM directly influencing their directly managed FLE to co-operate with other FLEs, which are experienced by both the LM and the FLE. This is the intervention and it exists in the domain of the empirical. It will also be the result of an event, be an event itself or trigger an event, so will therefore also exist in the domain of the actual for them, their FLEs and for other LMs and their FLEs, even if they do not experience this intervention directly. This intervention by the LM to influence their FLE to 'co-operate' may in turn trigger a generative mechanism relating to 'co-operating', which exists in the domain of the real. This may trigger other mechanisms, for example, organisational contextual factors such as cultural norms on 'co-operating with colleagues'; structures such as hierarchies from the differing experiences of the FLEs; 'powers and capacities' such as the potential for the FLE to work in this way based on attitudes and past experiences; HRM systems and practices which may encourage co-operation through training though inhibit it through inappropriate reward policies; and so on. Other interventions may be made by the LM to manage some of these influences as they seek to influence the instruction to co-operate by triggering the mechanism *co-operate*. Ultimately this will lead to an influence on how the FLE uses their own agency and discretion and how they achieve their individual performance outcomes.

Therefore the aim of the study for practitioners was to identify these interventions and mechanisms within the 'problematic context' of people management; having then categorised these generative mechanisms, or collection of mechanisms, they will be used to explain how LMs have used their discretion to influence FLE performance outcomes within a people management context.

3.1.4.4 Case Study Design: Implications for the Choice of Organisation Choice

As Gerring (2007:45) points out "case studies….allow one to peer into the box of causality to locate the intermediate factors lying between some structural case and its purported effect". Case study was the selected approach, because both this study and a case study are understood by me, as a researcher, to be "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real world context" (Yin, 2014:16).

A holistic case study, meaning here a single function within a single organisation (Yin, 2014:50), was selected as it provided the type of intense study thought necessary to generate data suitable for systematic and methodical analysis to uncover structural factors and context in rich detail, and make the identification of generative mechanisms more likely (Edwards et al., 2014: 169). A holistic case study design also supports the in-depth approach necessary for the "thematic content analysis coding for evidence of constructs [interventions and generative mechanisms]" identified by Edmondson & McManus (2007) when conducting research in a nascent area, such as this is viewed to be by the researcher.

This approach has been informed by that taken by Truss (2001), Purcell et al., 2003; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007, Martins (2007) and Harney & Jordan (2008), who all looked at single organisations in great detail (Truss, 2001; Purcell et al., 2003) and functions or departments in great detail (Purcell et al., 2003; Martins, 2007; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Harney & Jordan, 2008). Purcell et al. (2003) and Purcell & Hutchinson (2007) then made comparisons of the aggregate of the collected data from all these individual studies (Purcell et al., 2003), but their initial sampling and model building focused on single organisations and departments or functions within these. Miles & Huberman (1994:28) advise that for this type of study a single case study is

selected as homogeneous sampling of this type allows, as far is as possible, the organisational context (general rules, standard processes, cultural factors and norms) to be the same, making comparison between LMs and FLEs more valid and reliable.

The case study organisation will also be required to have FLEs who have specific performance outcomes for which they hold responsibility and be amenable to the type of access required to develop trust and build a deep understanding of how it operates. Further, a single holistic case study design set in a function within a large organisation is thought to have a devolved HRM system and be able to provide the numbers of LMs and FLEs needed to carry out purposive sampling.

Because multiple perspectives were being sought, it was thought that the organisation needed to be of sufficient size to accommodate this in a practical sense and based on the literature, suggesting that larger organisations were more likely to have devolved their HRM systems to LMs (McGovern et al., 1997; Truss, 2001; Wright, 2002; Purcell et al., 2003; Boselie et al., 2005; Hales, 2005; Paauwe & Boselie, 2005a). This has since been found by Brewster et al. (2015) to be less likely, though with this study the organisation had devolved HRM to the line. As already mentioned, the study will be gathering data on environmental factors such as organisational politics, culture, power, history, stability, uncertainty and systemic interdependencies (Pawson & Tilley, 1997; Denyer et al., 2008; Ackroyd, 2009), therefore building trust between myself and those granting access and the interviewees was viewed as important. This was achieved by meeting appropriate stakeholders as required and providing information in order to satisfy any questions they had about the study and reassuring them of the care that would be taken to respect and protect confidentiality (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Kvale, 1996; Danermark et al., 2006; Blaikie, 2007; Buchanan & Bryman, 2009). This was done in recognition of the permission required to have access to sensitive information and also to accommodate the necessary exchange of data to build such an understanding. The existing relationships with stakeholders in the case study site aided this bridging activity.

To this end a clear criteria of what was required of the organisation was rationalised and created once the research design, as explained above, was defined. Table 6 shows these criteria developed, which the selected organisation, Ochre Inc., was required to match.

Table 6 Case Study Organisation Selection Criteria

Case Study Criteria	Reason for Inclusion
Large organisation with HRM practices devolved to LMs (Though Brewster et al. (2015) has since found this to be not the case)	Study is focused on 'people management' context, so vital
Single function where sufficient dyads and LM teams are present	To allow purposive sampling
FLE outcomes which are attributed to the actions of FLEs	To allow dyad to be created and used for data gathering and analysis
Excellent access to the organisation	For practical purposes as to be able to gather data required of an intensive study
Permission to access background interviewees	Including HR Business Partners or others as required
Access to documentation	Such as job descriptions or other company materials to assist in theorising structures and mechanisms
Permission to retain data, findings and only provide for the organisation outputs	To protect the anonymity of LMs, FLEs or other data sources
Agreement to use the design proposition produced as the basis for further empirical study	To support the intentions of contribution to practice as well as to academic knowledge to be able to move beyond 'pragmatic validity' of findings
LMs with span of control under 14	To increase the likelihood of interaction and influence which would be helpful to the study
LMs who manage non managerial FLEs, i.e. managing individual contributors	To keep focus on first LMs

3.1.4.5 Summary of Research Design

The section above illustrates that in my view, as a researcher, the way most likely to achieve an answer to a 'how' research question (Yin, 2014:14), meet the purpose of a DBA study in a nascent area of literature intended to produce a contribution to academic and practitioner knowledge using CIMO-logic, and delivered by taking a critical realist ontological and epistemological approach, was understood to be a holistic case study. Using a revised version of Partington's Research Design Process model, the key choices made are outlined in the diagram in Figure 11.

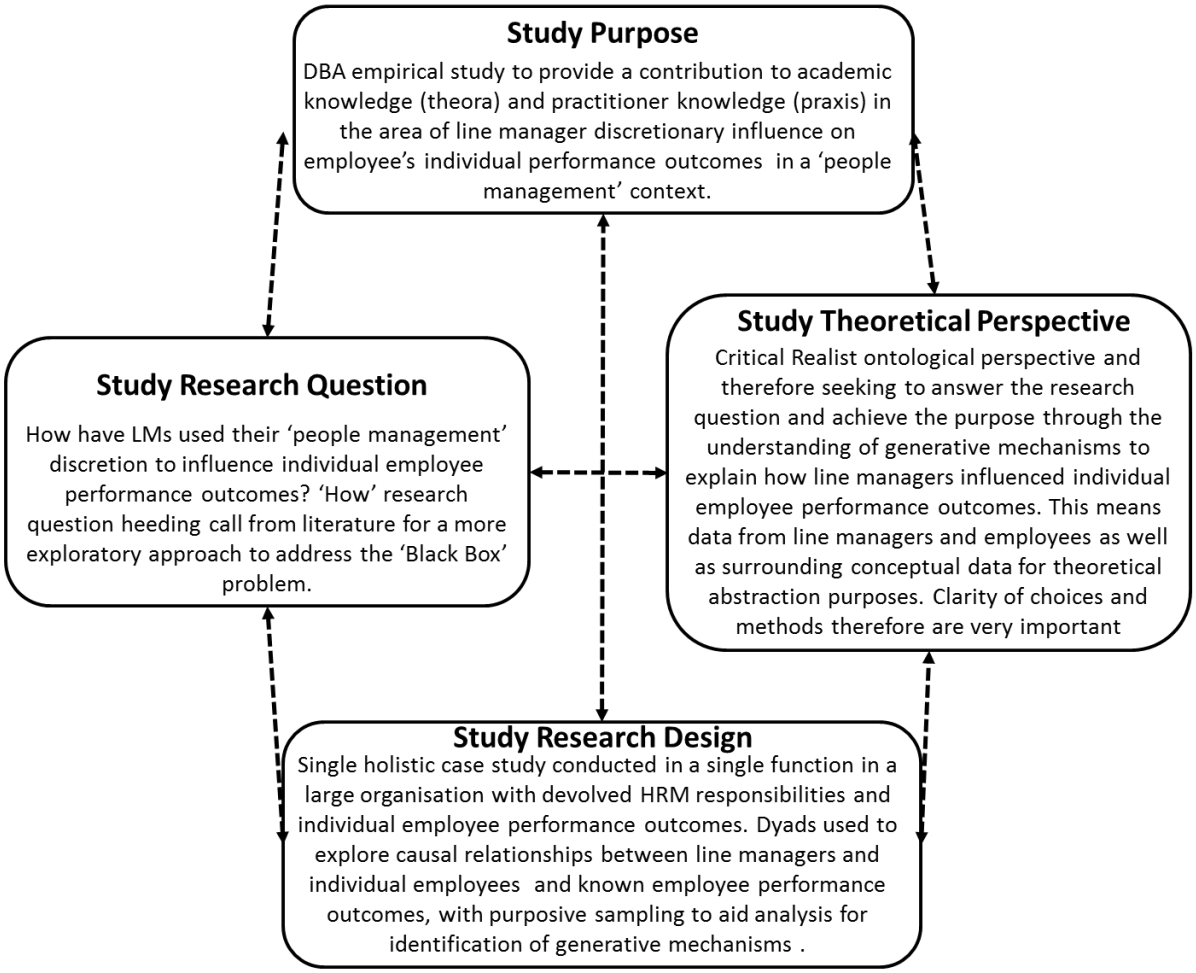

Figure 11 Research Design Process Applied to This Study (Partington, 2002)

3.2 Part Two – Conducting the Empirical Study

This section addresses the two key stages in carrying out the study: the first part covers the stages involved in the management of the fieldwork that was undertaken and the second how the analysis of the data that was gathered was carried out. The study was a single holistic case study (Yin, 2014:50) conducted in a single function in a large organisation with devolved HRM practice responsibilities. Dyads of LMs and FLEs selected using purposive sampling were used to explore within this case the potential causal relationships between the dyads and known performance outcomes which would allow theorising for possible reasons to explain the differences and for the development of explanatory generative mechanisms.

3.2.1 Fieldwork

The four stages involved in conducting the data gathering part of the study are illustrated in Figure 12.

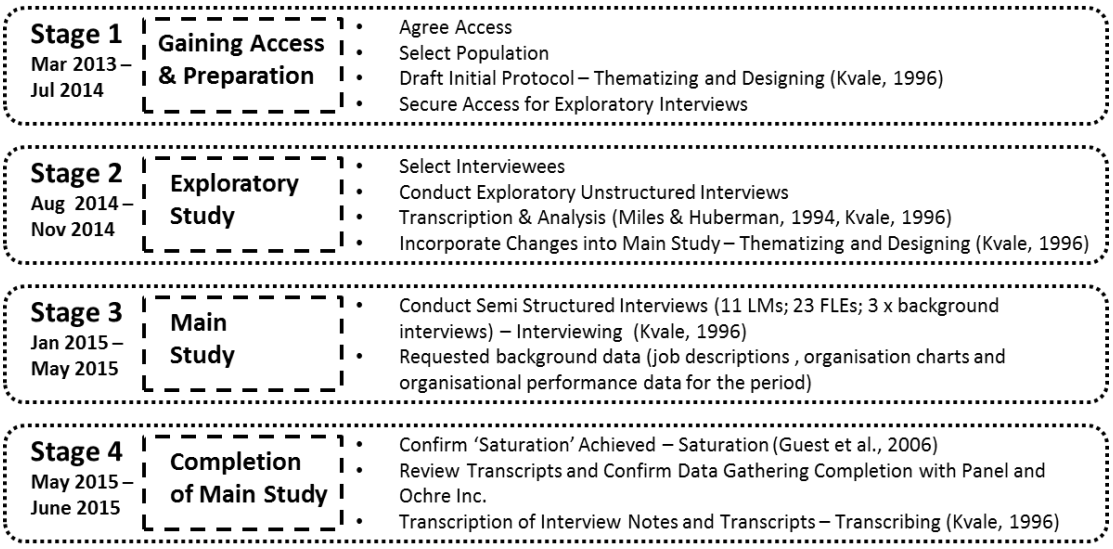

Figure 12 Four Stages of Fieldwork in the Study

3.2.1.1 Gaining Access and Preparation

Ochre Inc., a US owned Multinational Corporation who operates in the technology sector selling directly to other corporates was identified as a research site in early 2013. Ochre Inc. was selected because I had business contacts within the LM and HRM functions that let me know it had the quantitative qualities sought in the criteria for the case outlined, as well as existing relationships with stakeholders who allowed the more sensitive, qualitative aspects, such as confidentiality and management of outputs, to be broached and agreed. An initial approach was made during 2013 and, following extensive negotiations, final approval by the US Legal Department was granted in 2014. During this period it was agreed that while Cranfield would retain intellectual property rights on any research, Ochre Inc. would receive a summary report highlighting any areas the research uncovered that could benefit the organisation but without revealing identities of those providing data. Liaisons were put in place so that following the completion of the DBA process, the second phase of further testing and refining of the design proposition could take place.

To help minimise the difference in context experienced by those included in the study, and also to maximise the commonality of practice and experience, it was decided to conduct it within a single function within European, Middle Eastern and Africa (EMEA), namely tango function, the largest function in the UK within EMEA. Of the 12 senior managers in tango function, seven are responsible for business areas containing FLE sales teams which were comparable and relevant for the study based on initial discussions with tango function's HRMBP in July 2014. The seven selected for inclusion in this study gave an overall population of 154 from which to select dyads for the interviewees. Some were based in Ireland so were excluded as they would have experienced a different context, leaving six sales team areas and a population of 145 comprised of 25 teams, ranging in size from four to 12 team members.

Upon agreeing access, I invested time to reflect upon my own subjectivity as I had known the case study organisation as a client for three years at this point. Adopting a critical realist philosophical approach let me acknowledge this as well as hold awareness of it. While I had prior knowledge of the organisation, which would prove beneficial in grasping and understanding structural, cultural and operational factors, I had less prior knowledge of the specific FLE and LM activities and responsibilities I was investigating. While this was a good thing for me as it limited the preconceived assumptions I might have held, it also made me work harder to make sure that I was not jumping too quickly to conclusions on what I was seeing and why. I took deliberate steps during the data gathering and analysis stages to accommodate a reflexive approach. Firstly, I sought alternative explanations for what I was finding throughout, through the use of notes, reflection and numerous conversations with my panel members, whom I invited to challenge my findings and thoughts. Secondly, I gave care and attention during the data gathering steps to develop a design and protocol that let the interviewees speak for themselves while remaining supportive of the aims of the study. Thirdly, I used a design deliberately chosen to provide data on contextual matters, including structures, influences and environmental factors so I would not be tempted to invoke my own preconceived ideas but instead would let the case 'speak for itself'.

3.2.1.1.1 Data Gathering - Purposive Sampling

Paying attention to the research question, although this was a holistic case study design (Yin, 2014:50) looking at a single unit of analysis (the 'function'), the decision was made to pair LMs and FLEs together when selecting interviewees, as illustrated in Figure 13. These dyads ensured that accounts of the experiences and events from LMs and FLEs could be analysed in conjunction with each other, helping the understanding of how the LM used interventions and generative mechanisms to influence the FLE.

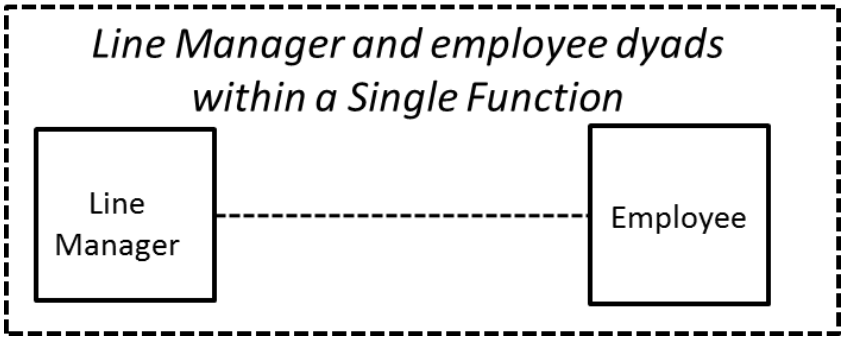

Figure 13 LM and FLE Dyad

To further assist analysis by gathering data that connected LMs and FLEs directly with each other, purposive sampling was adopted for the selection of the dyads of LM and FLE which was being used in the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Easterby-Smith et al., 2006; Palys, 2008:697; Yin, 2014). This meant deliberate choice was made on which dyads were selected, which achieved dyads based on known individual FLE performance outcomes. This was adopted as the research question is focused on explaining influence on individual FLE performance outcomes and having extremes of performance would allow units of analysis, as well as the comparison of accounts from individual LMs and FLEs (Yin, 2014), to be compared and contrasted in order to understand differences. This concept is illustrated in Figure 14.

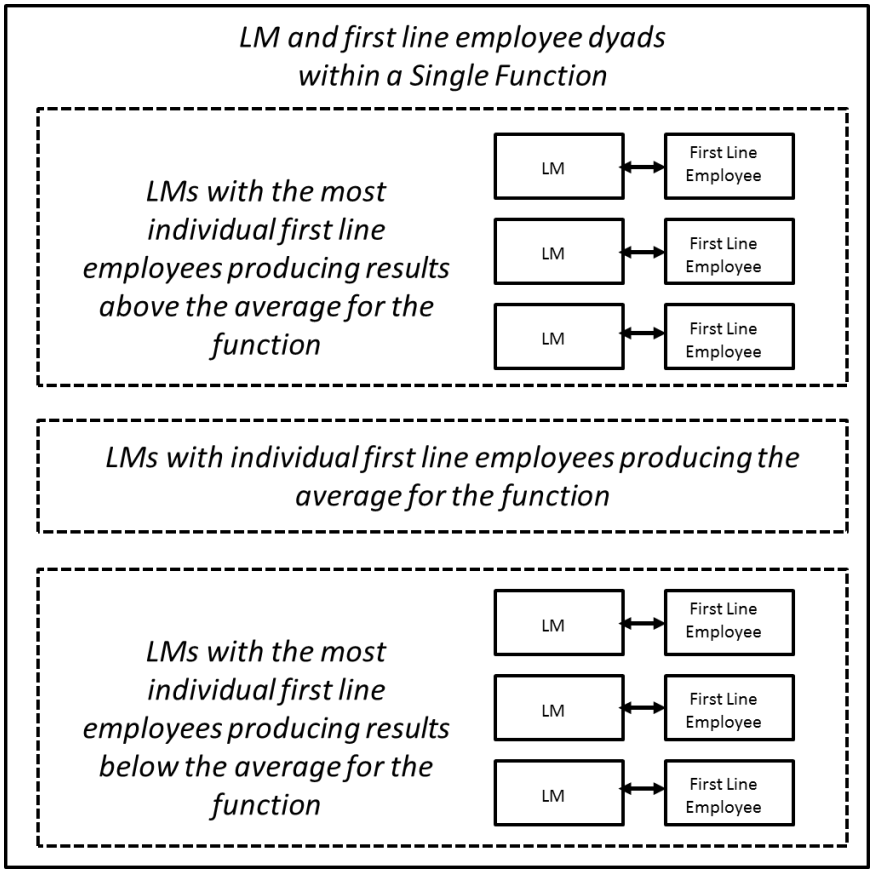

Figure 14 Purposive Sampling by Extremes of Performance in the Study

This was carried out in the case study site by LMs being separated into extremes of high and low performance based on the performance of the individuals within their respective teams. The average team member performance was calculated from the data provided by Ochre Inc. EMEA, showing that the average performance per FLE (Rep) was 90%. This was then used to calculate which teams had the most members within it above 90%, and which teams had the least. These were ranked from 1 out of 25 to 25 out of 25. This created two groupings of dyads: LMs with the most FLEs above the performance measure average for the function (the high performing group), and those with the most below the average for the function (the low performing group) (Easterby-Smith et al., 2006:46). It also allowed comparison between teams and the events they have or have not shared experiences of, as they have been selected for homogeneity (Miles & Huberman, 1994:28). The teams from 1 – 6 and 19 – 25 were approached for permission to be included in the study. This is illustrated in Figure 15 from the teams that were used in the data gathering stage of the main study.

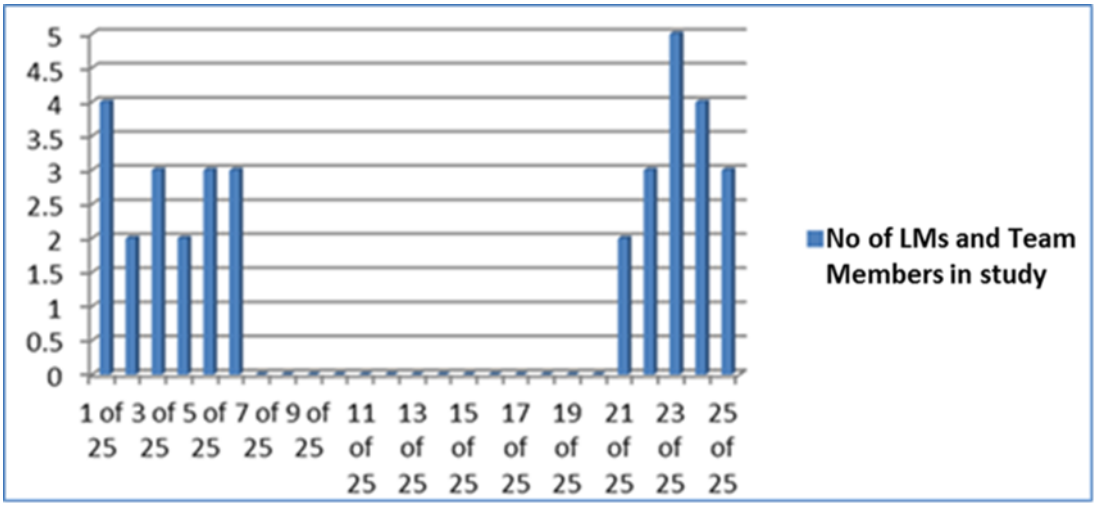

Figure 15 Purposive Sampling within the Case Study

3.2.1.1.2 Ethical Considerations with LM and FLE Dyads

Once a decision had been made to conduct data gathering and analysis at the level of LM and FLE dyads, I identified ethical considerations regarding the relationship between LMs and their FLEs and also those within the study to the wider organisation, which I wanted to address. Here I am defining ethics as "that which is morally accepted as 'good' and right' as opposed to 'bad' and 'wrong'" (Partington, 2002:22), meaning that I wanted to ensure that I was acting in a 'good' or 'right' way in a moral sense, specifically not carrying out acts which would put any of those I interviewed in a situation that would be prejudicial to them in any way.

I sought to achieve this in a number of ways. Firstly I was clear at the outset with the case study organisation that confidentiality would be maintained at all times, no data would be shared that would reveal individuals to either the organisation or each other. Secondly once the purposive sampling was carried out by me I sought to ensure anonymity by contacting all interviewees myself to protect identities. Thirdly all interviews were conducted in a private meeting room at an Ochre Inc. office location. Fourthly I ensured that interviewees were treated respectfully so a consent form was completed by all interviewees. Each interviewee was also given a written summary that provided information already sent electronically advising them of their right to withdraw at any time, their right to confidentiality and the purpose of the interview. Fifthly I sought to make them aware that I had ensured their confidentiality and therefore encouraged them to maintain it, if they so wished, by reminding them of this.

Finally I maintained careful anonymous records and created codenames for all interviewees so that their identity would be protected by my actions, including the use of codenames and pseudonyms within this thesis.

All the recordings remained in my possession, were anonymised, password protected and transcribed using a 3rd party transcriber who would not be told the organisation name or the names of those whose words they were transcribing (Voicescript Ltd.). Transcripts would be anonymised, remain in the researcher's possession only and would be destroyed should interviewees request this at any time.

These steps were informed by research methodology (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Partington, 2002; Easterby-Smith et al., 2006; Bryman, 2008; 2012; Cassell & Symon, 2012), but were mainly driven by a strong intention to adhere to the moral obligations I identified at the outset of this section and the responsibility this created for me towards the interviewees. Whether as a consequence of the steps taken or not, during the data gathering stage several interviewees revealed confidential information regarding personal health, financial and other matters, much of which I have excluded from the data.

3.2.1.2 Exploratory Study

Before the final design could be confirmed for the case study, a number of areas in the literature were unclear, outlined in Figure 16, making final design choices difficult. After consultation with my panel, it was decided some further clarification of these areas through an Exploratory Study would be a prudent step.

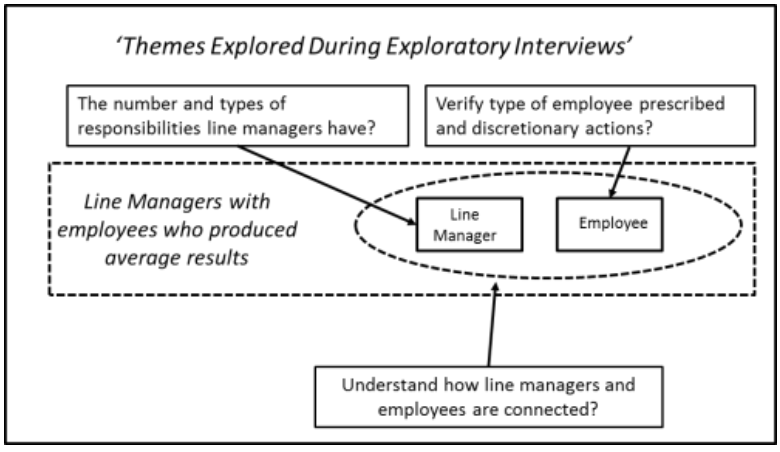

Figure 16 Literature Themes Explored During the Exploratory Interviews

3.2.1.2.1 Selecting Interviewees for Exploratory Study

Within the tango function the interviewees for the exploratory study were selected from the average group, as illustrated in Figure 17.

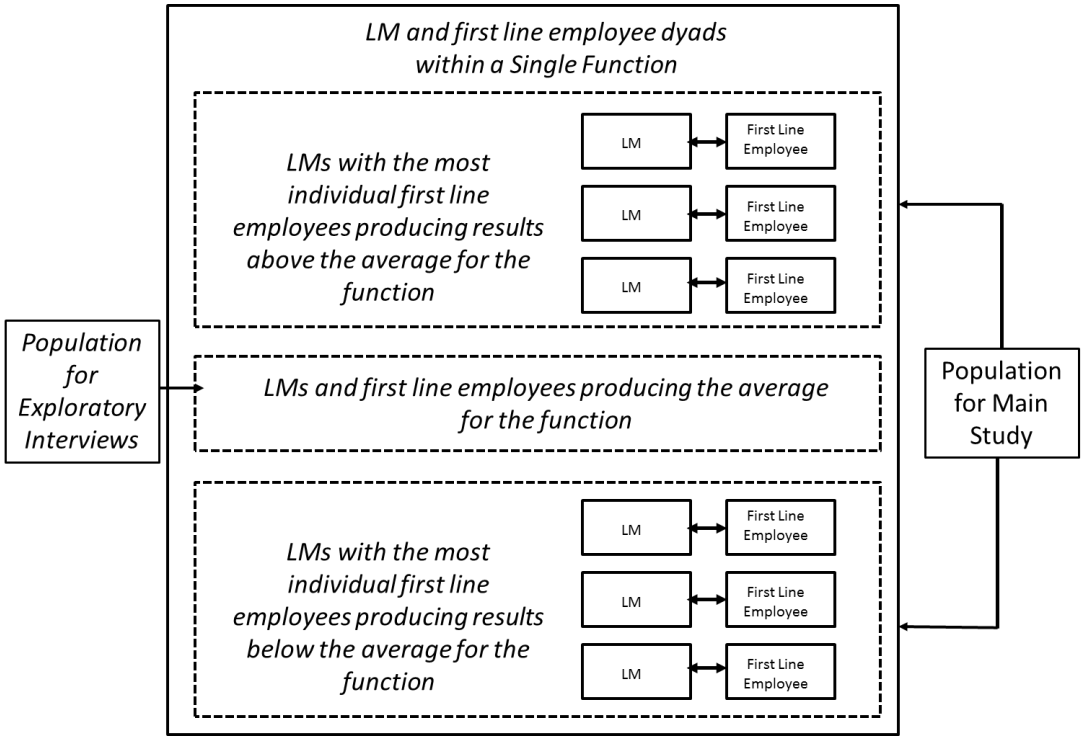

Figure 17 Exploratory Study Interviewees

This step was taken as it was thought that while it was expected that 11-12 LMs plus 2-3 FLEs would be interviewed from the above and below groups in order to achieve saturation, at the time of the exploratory study this was not known, so to protect those selected for the main study, those from the average population were used for the exploratory study. Three interviewees were selected: one LM and two FLEs. More would have been conducted but those interviewed were felt to have provided the data required and the exploratory study was ended after the three as it was obvious to me that I had a much clearer understanding of the themes of interest. Those interviewed are outlined in Table 7 and further details of the study and analysis are in Appendix C.

Table 7 Exploratory Interviewees

Date	Interviewee	Location
10th October, 2014	First IC (IC-A)	Ochre Inc. office location / In London
14th October, 2014	LM (LM-A)	Ochre Inc. office location / Outside London
14th October, 2014	Second IC (IC-B)	Ochre Inc. office location / Outside London

3.2.1.2.2 Exploratory Findings Theme One - FLE Mix of Prescribed and Discretionary Actions

The exploratory study helped confirm that in practice, as suggested by the literature, FLEs were using a mix of discretionary and prescribed tasks and actions to produce the performance outcomes for which they have responsibility. By better understanding what in practice 'prescribed' or 'discretionary' actually means for FLEs helped in identifying how the main interview protocol should be developed and what type of questions needed to be included, and what probes and prompts should be used. At a practical level, while I had experience in working with senior leaders in Ochre Inc., the exploratory study helped inform on some of the type of practices and approaches that were made by FLEs who at that time were unfamiliar to me as a population. This better understanding of potential categories of prescribed or discretionary choices and actions carried out by FLEs to achieve performance responsibilities therefore also assisted in understanding what type of data would be required when conducting the main interviews.

However, the environment in which this unfolded was of a more complex nature than expected from the literature, meaning while FLE responsibilities are simple, there is considerable flexibility available for them in how the FLEs, and therefore their LMs, can achieve this. This includes significant scope for personal choices in terms of how they will interact with Ochre Inc. customers as well as Ochre Inc. stakeholders. The consequence of this is a significant level of variability between different FLEs with a consequent impact on how this can be understood during the main study so the influence of the LMs can also be understood. As well as their personal choice, what generates prescription and discretion for FLEs is a combination of that which is created by organisational rules and structural factors. This means that what made an FLE's

choice or action ‘prescribed’ or ‘discretionary’ was understood to arise both through formal organisational systems, or ‘rules’, or through the agency (discretionary or prescribed actions), of others.

So as well as helping build confidence that prescription and discretion exists for FLEs, they also illustrated that this takes place in a complex environment. This complexity meant the main study design needed to assume prescribed and discretionary would exist, but allow the capturing of data on the ways this could arise within the complexity found from the agency of others as well as through formal and informal rules or processes.

3.2.1.2.2.1 Exploratory Findings Theme Two - Components and Connections within people management

The synthesis of the literature identified in the Systematic Review produced an understanding of conceptual components that comprise the current understanding of people management, and how these are understood to be configured and connected, which are the HRM System, its ‘intention’, via HRM Practice ‘implementation’ and enactment by LMs, to, through them, influence FLE behaviour and therefore the actions they carry out in order to achieve performance ‘outcomes’. While this provides a useful conceptual guide for the ways that these components are thought to be configured and connect, it reflects the literature’s existing understanding of these phenomena. The exploratory study allowed a comparison of the components suggested by the literature with what was to be found in Ochre Inc. in practice.

What emerged from the exploratory interviews and the analysis of the data they generated was greater confidence that the components of people management were as described in the literature. However, how they were found to interact in Ochre Inc. was more complex as there were found to be greater potential connections than described in the literature between LMs, FLEs and other stakeholders. Also the ‘people and performance model’ (Purcell et al., 2003) and Wright & Nishii’s (2013) model of HRM practice enactment, utilises a conceptual model where the LMs and FLEs operate in isolation within a dyad. It was suggested by the exploratory interviews that LMs and FLEs operated in traditional manager/subordinate ways where one, the LM, influences the way the other, the FLE, uses their discretion, and that other hierarchies or other

connections between LMs, FLEs and other stakeholders were in existence within this context.

3.2.1.2.2.2 Exploratory Finding Theme Three - LM Responsibilities

Purcell & Hutchinson (2007) suggest people management involves two types of LM responsibility: HRM responsibilities (implementing and enacting HRM practices) and 'leadership' responsibilities. If the study were to understand how LMs are influencing individual FLE performance outcomes, the influence upon the LMs of the responsibilities they have will need to be understood as part of this in order to appreciate the structures and powers within which they are operating.

The exploratory study confirmed that LMs have the two types of responsibilities found in people management (HRM and 'leadership' responsibilities) but that 'lead' and 'control', as described by Purcell et al., in their earlier study (2003) were too restrictive and unwieldy to capture the breadth of what LMs in this context were using their discretion for. Therefore the later description in Purcell & Hutchinson (2007) of 'leadership behaviours' was followed by this study to accommodate this understood breadth of LM discretion. This meant that during the study, open questions and an exploratory approach were taken to identify LM non HRM practice responsibilities and discretion as well as LM discretion during HRM practice enactment.

3.2.1.3 The Main Study

In total, 37 interviews were carried out between January and May 2015. These were made up of 12 LMs, 23 of their directly reporting FLEs and two HRM Business Partners, one of whom was interviewed twice. These are summarised in Table 8.

Table 8 Summary of Main Data Gathering Interviews

	High Performing Team	Low Performing Team	Individuals Who Achieved Target	Individuals Who Missed Target	Total
Line Managers	6	5	7	4	**11**
Employees	11	12	9	14	**23**
Dyads	11	12	-	-	**23**
Teams	6	5	-	-	**11**
Background interviews	-	-	-	-	**3**

3.2.1.3.1 Data Gathering Overview

The primary data collection method was the interview with the aim of "attaining qualitative descriptions of the life world of the subject with respect to interpretation of their meaning" (Kvale, 1996:124). All interviews were organised by me from my own list of those identified from the purposive sampling activity already described. After the interview was agreed all were conducted at Ochre Inc. locations in a private meeting room. Previous visits to Ochre Inc. had confirmed rooms offered privacy and occupants could not be seen from those outside the room.

All interviews were recorded using a digital recorder. One interview was conducted via Skype as the interviewee had to attend a customer meeting on the day of our proposed interview. This was also carried out only after I had confirmed a private location was available where they would not be overheard.

To ensure that interviews clearly operated under an informed consent environment, at the outset of each interview there would be an initial procedure put in place. This process involved: explanation of the interview process using a checklist and covering the purpose of interview, confidentiality, use of recorder, lifespan of recordings, access to data, report production and interviewee's right to withdraw; production of Student ID to verify identity of researcher; provision of a copy of FAQs (sent previously); and completion of a consent form by each interviewee.

Each interview was scheduled for an hour and most lasted just a little longer than this, which was always driven by the interviewees. The shortest lasted 55 minutes while the longest was 1 hr and 45 minutes. After each interview, time was set aside to reflect and record written notes on key observations from the discussion and also how I managed my own conduct.

The interviews were subsequently transcribed by a transcription company (Voicescript Ltd) who only received a recording with a code name and not the interviewee's real name or the identity of the organisation.

3.2.1.3.2 Data Gathering - Interview Process and Research Protocol

Semi-structured interviews were used since they provide structure to focus the study but retain flexibility to facilitate the exploration of phenomena or constructs previously

unexamined (Kvale, 1996; Easterby-Smith et al., 2006). By having a series of prepared thematic areas of inquiry they also allowed me to listen carefully to the interviewee and use pre-prepared probes to explore interventions used by or LMs that influenced how FLEs achieved their performance outcomes. Semi-structured interviews also helped support construct validity during analysis when comparing and contrasting the accounts of dyads, individuals or groups (Yin, 2014).

The exploratory study led to a change to the research protocol based on the environment found in Ochre Inc. to provide greater structure and focus. Chell's (2012:45) adapted format of Flanagan's (1954) Critical Incident Technique was used as it was developed for use in in-depth holistic single case studies in complex environments to support interviews' structure and focus, and to encourage the provision of what would be of value to the study while helping interviewees recall the experiences and events which explained the performance outcomes which we would be discussing. This gave a practical set of guidelines to help interviewees identify suitable events and the researcher to gather data suitable for the aims of the study and the research question.

This is used as an "investigation of significant occurrences, events, incidents, process or issues" Chell, 2012:46). In Ochre Inc. the 'deal' was used for this and also gave a common area of interest of LMs and FLEs that related to FLE performance outcomes. The achievement of deals was therefore the incident used for LMs and FLEs to explain how they applied their respective discretion during the period the case was studying (Chell, 2012:47-48).

This step was taken to help interviewees discuss real situations, experiences and events, enriching the discussion and enhancing the insight into the structural factors, agents and influences highlighted by the exploratory study as useful for understanding the structures, powers and capacities within the environment of the tango function and Ochre Inc. (Kvale, 1996; Partington, 2000; 2002; Easterby-Smith et al., 2006; Chell, 2012) and to enhance construct validity by having a consistent procedure (Yin, 2014:46). While not an embedded case study or a multiple case study, it felt appropriate to take account of the benefit to construct validity that having some form of replication logic would bring.

3.2.1.3.2.1 Providing Interviewees with the Background of the Study

The first part of the interview was used for establishing rapport and being clear on context and purpose, and was carried out methodically in order to stimulate and maintain trust and help the interviewee relax, enhancing relationship building and trust formation (Kvale, 1996:127). This involved seeking common ground or understanding, sharing common knowledge of Ochre Inc. and using the experience the researcher already had working with Ochre Inc. as a client. This demonstrated interest in the organisation as well as the interviewees as individuals.

3.2.1.3.2.2 Focusing the Interview

The second part of the interview involved interviewees selecting four 'deals' that were representative of typical and non-typical successes and failures for the period of interest of the study. This was done as multiple actors' views of single events or related events were expected to be found. This also enhanced internal validity by having a format that allows accounts from one interviewee to be analysed alongside others, principally in the dyad between LM and their FLE, but also between different LMs from the 'low performing group' to those on the 'high performing group' (Yin, 2014:46).

The questions used to isolate the typical and non-typical 'deals' were developed following the exploratory interviews and consultation with panel members, and are detailed below:

1. A successful 'deal' which was the most typical for those which were successful in (year ending) FY14
2. An unsuccessful 'deal' which was the most typical for those which were unsuccessful in (year ending) FY14
3. A successful 'deal' which was the least typical for those which were successful in (year ending) FY14
4. An unsuccessful 'deal' which was the least typical for those which were unsuccessful in (year ending) FY14

This was provided in written form to help interviewees relax by providing an aid to recall, as well as keeping the interview focused on key events that connect to the 'performance' achieved, helping them access memories in a reliable and methodical

way, and designed to make this task more straightforward and less strenuous (Fisher & Geiselman, 1992; Kvale, 1996; Easterby-Smith et al., 2006; Buchanan & Bryman, 2009; Chell, 2012).

As well as the four 'deals' that formed the bulk of each interview discussion, the form requested some biographical data to help the identification of individuals' characteristics without revealing identities during later analysis, sought as the study was an intensive design (Buchanan & Bryman, 2009).

Interviewees were allowed as long as they wanted to complete the 'Background Information Form' so they had time to recall representative examples. This was done to support and assist interviewees during memory retrieval which has the potential to be a physically challenging and tiring exercise (Fisher & Geiselman, 1992; Kahneman, 2011). In practice the completion of the form lasted between 5 and 10 minutes.

3.2.1.3.2.3 Controlling the Interview

The third part of the interview developed was the 'Main Conversation' and explored the four 'deals' provided by the interviewees. Semi-structured questions were used for this and to explore how the interviewee used their discretion, influences on how they used their discretion, and how HRM system or practices influenced them. Kvale (1996:124) advised that care be taken by the researcher to limit bias as much as possible by only using basic or focused probes during interviews.

To allow interviewees the opportunity to provide deeper insight into their accounts, probes were used that allowed them to offer explanations and abstractions if they wanted to. I also consciously and deliberately made use of pregnant pauses when interviewees finished long answers to ensure that interviewees were given sufficient time to recall events or find ways to express what they may have had to formulate into ideas or views (Easterby-Smith et al., 2006:93).

As previously noted, retrieval of memory can be a tiring process (Fisher & Geiselman, 1992; Kahneman, 2011) and it was felt important to make accessing and describing what happened, and also how and why it happened this way, more straightforward for each interviewee (Easterby-Smith et al., 2006:96).

To provide some guidance to help me retain consistency and focus, I created probes informed by Baker's (2002) 'laddering approach' as a way of reviewing probes to see if they encouraged abstraction and not as a method for understanding the way interviewees processed their environment, as that was not the purpose of the study. These were used when I felt a point or topic would need further expansion, or explanation. I also took great care to engage with interviewees' previous answers if they were relevant, again using prompts alongside probes. An example of an interview question and probes is given in Table 9.

It was hoped by taking these steps to help each interviewee increase the quality of their recall. So while the questions were 'short and to the point' they were hoped to be effective in allowing the interviewees to expand at length, yet in a productive way, that was more likely to reveal useful data and help address the research question in a structured way (Easterby-Smith et al., 2006; Chell, 2012).

Table 9 Example of FLE Interview Question, Probes and Prompts

Main Interview Question	Probes and Prompts
Which stakeholders inside Ochre contributed most to the result you achieved during 2013 – 2014?	- *Stakeholder & Position?* - *Impact Made on You?* - *HR Influences on this?* - *Connect to previous answers?*

Allowing what HRM practices were being used to emerge from the perspective of interviewees rather than from a predetermined list was informed by calls from the literature to look at HRM practices from the perspective of those using them (Boxall & Purcell, 2008:218; Guest, 2011; Paauwe et al., 2013:10). This was done so they were able to provide not just a rich explanation of the experience, events and drivers of these events but "sufficient data to allow the identification of features, retroduction to possible causes, elimination of alternatives and identification of the general mechanism or causal structure at work" (Bhaskar, 1998; Danermark et al., 2006; Edwards et al., 2014).

This approach of course is not without limitations as it may increase the result in the distorted responses because of recall error, or self-serving bias responses (Patton, 2002).

However, by focusing the conversation on typical and non-typical 'deals', the *a priori* theoretical focus on structure, agents, influences and agency, Yin's (2014:121) recommendation on using multiple data sources about the same or similar events, the use of known outcomes and the inclusion of background data from interviews and Ochre Inc. materials were intended to reduce the effects of this and increase the likelihood and therefore confidence that findings arose from a 'convergence of evidence'.

3.2.1.3.2.4 Concluding the Interview

A series of additional questions which prompted LMs and FLEs to state specific HRM practices, influences or other related matters that arose during the period of time in discussion were used at the end of the interview. These were retained until the end of the interview as they may have arisen within the main description of what took place from the perspective of the interviewees. Even when HRM related matters were raised during the main part of the interview, the questions were still asked but interviewees were not pressed if they stated that these matters had already been covered. Each interview was then concluded, the interviewee given the hard copy of the FAQs and my business card and were then thanked. A short thank you note was sent to each interviewee after the interview.

3.2.1.3.3 Background Interviews and Documentation

Background interviews were sought because social actors may give accounts of events that are genuine and consistent with their world view, but which are nevertheless presented from their personal point of view (Bhaskar, 1998:292).

One was the dedicated HRMBP for tango function while the other supported Ochre Inc. development for EMEA including tango function. The dedicated HRMBP was interviewed first, in an interview which lasted 1 hour and 50 minutes. This interview provided background information on the HRM system, the process and practices involved as well as salient information on the environment within Ochre Inc. and tango function in particular during the period that was the focus of the study. Boxall & Purcell's (2008:172) 'individual human resource cycle' was used as a guide in these interviews to help the HRMBPs talk me through the way that LMs' HRM practice responsibilities were conducted in Ochre Inc.

At the end of that interview the HRMBP recommended that I also contact and speak with the other HRMBPs as they worked together on all FLE development matters, which was outlined as an important line management HRM practice responsibility. This was organised and carried out, and lasted for 1 hr and 10 minutes.

Finally a second meeting was sought with the original HRMBP in May 2015 as the main study data collection was coming to an end. This was used to clarify a number of emergent questions, probe particular areas and compare my appreciation of LMs' claimed approaches with the HRMBP's experience and viewpoint. Also as with the other interviews, these were recorded on a digital recorder and transcribed by Voicescript Ltd.

Documentation, as additional sources of data, were also requested from the HRMBP following the exploratory interviews, including organisational charts, job descriptions and company reports for the period from 2013 to 2014. This was intended to enhance my analysis and help me better understand how, during the financial year ending in June 2014, LMs in tango function within the study used their people management discretion to influence the individual FLE performance outcomes of their FLEs. This enabled the comparison of accounts and evidence intended to "improve the accuracy of the researcher's judgments" (Jick, 1979:602) on my understanding of the structures, powers and capacities within the environment of tango function during the period of the study.

3.2.1.4 **Completion of the Main Study**

Qualitative research, when carrying out a study focused on theory building using a purposive homogeneous sampling approach, will typically require a small sample frame size (Miles & Huberman, 1994:27). This must still be large enough to justify any claims made (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:825) while accommodating a sufficient population that represents insight into the phenomena of interest (Easterby-Smith et al., 2006). This means that adjudging when enough data have been gathered will be a subjective matter, largely dependent on the researcher being confident that data saturation of material is sufficient to develop a conceptual theory on what discretionary practices and what generative mechanisms have resulted in the differing FLE performance outcomes. Miles & Huberman (1994) suggest this means you have sufficient data to credibly give the researcher that confidence.

It was clear to me that saturation had been reached by early April when I had completed 80% of the interviews which were ultimately completed. Reviewing notes at the end of each interview showed that the same concepts, approaches and similar explanations were being generated in each interview. However, rather than conclude the study at that point, I considered it important to continue and ensure that I had succeeded in completing all the dyads that I still had scheduled. This I did and completed the final dyad in May. I then informed both my stakeholder in Ochre Inc. and my panel that my data gathering was complete.

3.2.2 Data Analysis

On the completion of the interviews, they were transcribed into MS Word, as outlined above, using pseudonyms for interviewees (by Voicescript Ltd) to maintain reliability. The main activity for my analysis was coding, which involves aggregating qualitative data into conceptual categories (Miles & Huberman, 1994). While I followed the six principles set out by Danermark et al. (2006:109), I wanted to do so in a systematic manner so King's (2012) template analysis was used to provide this, with two templates being used for the study, one for FLEs and one for LMs.

This method of coding lets a structured conceptual approach be followed but allows for looser emergent interpretation to take place by the use of an evolving template which records the main themes emerging from the data (King, 2012). King (2012) suggests that the template can be used from a realist position, when underlying causes of observable phenomena are being investigated, which was consistent with my study's aim to understand how LMs used their people management discretion to influence individual FLE performance outcomes.

As a content analysis technique, King (2012) advises that template analysis is philosophical perspective neutral, but continues that template analysis is done first by the production of a hierarchical template based on *a priori* theoretical constructs with narrower sub-themes created and connected to it to accommodate the data gathered, a view shared by Miles & Huberman (1994), Easterby-Smith et al. (2006), and Yin (2014:136). This was achieved by using the constructs of the Structural / Influences / Agents / Agency template developed from the findings in my exploratory study and

involved four stages: familiarisation, developing the template, refining the template and final template.

The stages followed are outlined in Figure 18.

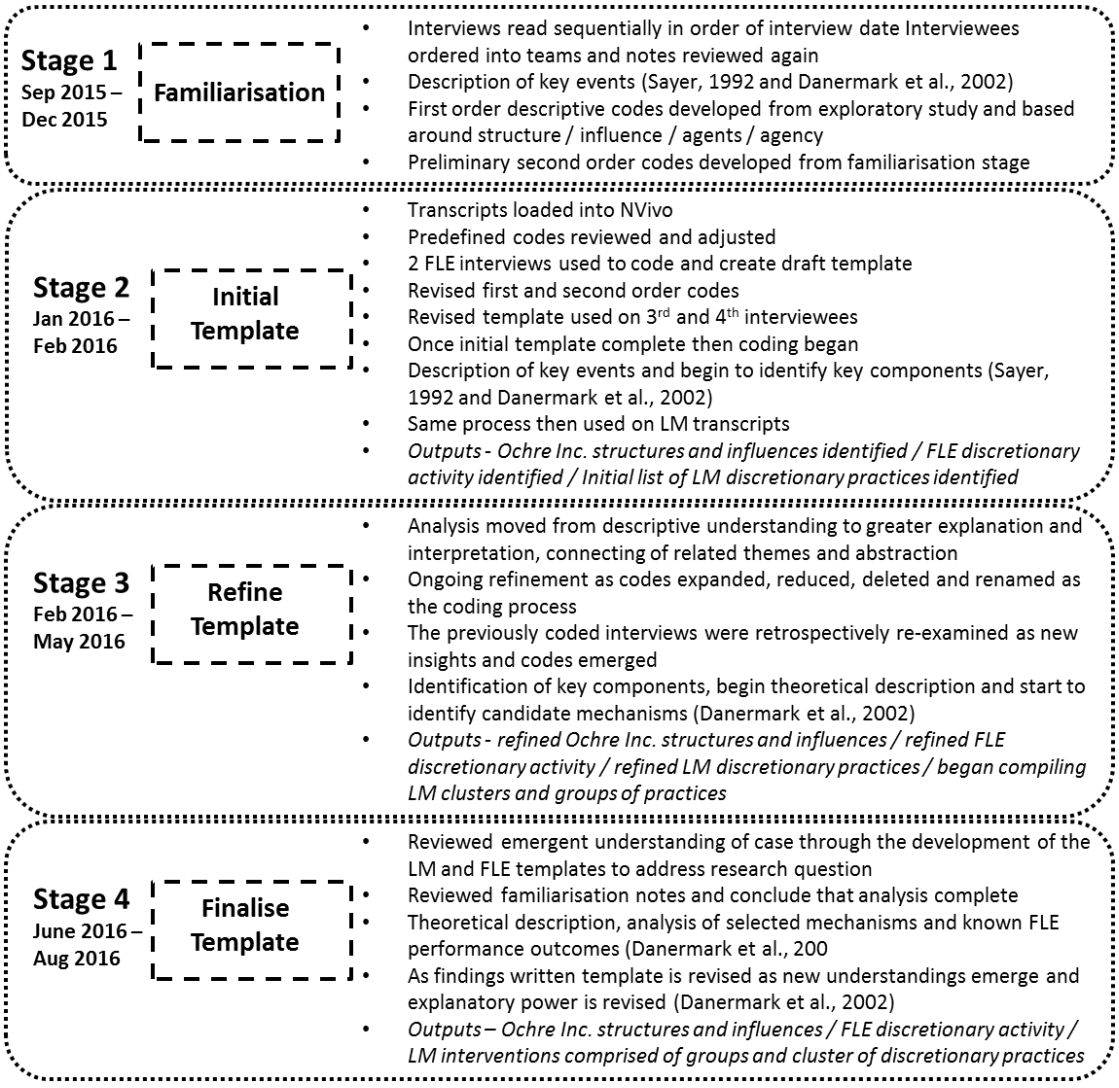

Figure 18 Four Stages of Template Analysis Followed (King, 2012)

3.2.2.1 Familiarisation

King (2012) and Easterby-Smith et al. (2006:123) recommend prior to any template development that immersion in the data is an essential part of the interpretive process (Miles & Huberman, 1994:57). These were read in the same order each interview was collected with notes being made during and at the end when the reading was completed. Each transcript was read in its entirety, referring to the audio recordings if tone of voice was wanted to help understand the meaning being conveyed. General notes were made

on major themes of what happened, what people were doing and who the main actors were (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Easterby-Smith et al., 2006).

This was then reviewed against the main research question for any obvious themes or understanding of it that was emerging. When this was completed for all transcripts they were then put into groupings of LM and respective FLEs (creating 11 groups in total) starting with the most successful group and ending with the least. This is illustrated in Table 10 of those in the study, using the pseudonym each was ascribed.

Table 10 Interviewees by LM and FLE Dyad and Ranking of Results

Type of Team	Team Rank Out of 25	Line Manager Pseudonym	Interview Date	Employee Pseudonym	Result Above (+) or Below (-) Target	Interview Date
Above Average Performing Teams	1	'Michael'	290115	'Fiona'	+	200215
				'Amir'	+	290115
				'Jennifer'	-	180215
	2	'Alan'	270315	'Sid'	+	270315
	3	'Paul'	290115	'Jasper'	+	200215
				'Albert'	-	260215
	4	'Jeff'	050315	'Janet'	+	290115
	5	'James'	010415	'Cary'	+	070515
				'Anoush'	-	210415
	6	'Terry'	230415	'Alun'	+	010515
				'Stewart'	-	010515
Below Average Performing Teams	21	'Rita'	160415	'Donald'	-	210415
	22	'Jim'	260315	'Colin'	+	210415
				'Stephen'	-	270415
	23	'Keith'	110215	'Patrick'	-	260315
				'Wendell'	-	050315
				'Philip'	-	110215
				'Roger'	-	040215
	24	'Aidan'	110215	'Lionel'	-	060215
				'Andy'	-	040215
				'Brian'	-	110215
	25	'Arthur'	060215	'Conor'	-	290115
				'Pete'	-	200215

Notes were made on emerging themes, common issues and unusual issues or events (Easterby-Smith et al., 2006:123). When this was complete these findings were then reviewed against the research question and sub research questions intended to support this process of building up further.

The approach I took while analysing for agency of those in the study or other actors related to them was not seeking to identify cognitive models of that agency. Though there was an appreciation that these cognitive models exist, the study was focused on appreciating this and interpreting how this had become manifest in the choices and actions subsequently made by actors. While time-consuming, this allowed me to develop a valuable understanding of what happened for the interviewees while beginning to identify themes or issues which then helped in the next stage of developing the initial template, and codes to be used in it, by having a richer appreciation of the key actors and actions (Patton, 2002; Easterby-Smith et al., 2006; King, 2012).

3.2.2.2 Developing the Initial Template

The initial template was developed firstly by creating a predefined hierarchy of codes, to allow the researcher to analyse the data at varying levels of specificity, a key feature of template analysis relevant to the data analysis in this study (King, 2012). This involves groups of codes clustered together to produce more general first order codes, which in this case were those based on the *a priori* constructs of Structural / Influences / Agents / Agency from the exploratory study and second order based on my emerging understanding from the familiarisation stage, such as the actors, actions and key events.

The initial template was created by firstly importing all interview transcripts into NVivo (QSR International Pty, Ltd. version 10, updated during the analysis to 11). Then an outline of possible first and second order codes was developed. This was turned into the initial template by taking two interviewees who achieved their target from the top performing LM in the study, selected as they represented FLE outcomes that were successful.

Following the advice of King (2012) and Miles & Huberman (1994), these three interviews were then coded using a ground up approach, meaning what emerged from the data was given priority over the pre-prepared first and second order codes. In

practice this meant that most of the second order codes were set aside and new second order codes were created, while the first order coding remained similar to that which was started, though with new codes added to it. The reason for so many changes of the second order coding is that when coding interviewees' accounts at this stage of the analysis much of the coding involved 'sorting' rather than 'interpreting' the data, and the second order codes were too conceptual for this stage of the analysis.

Once this was completed, the template each of the two interviews used was checked against it. Then the template developed by that stage was used to code the remaining FLE from the 'top performing', who did not achieve their target. The template allowed similarities and differences from this account to be coded easily and the template was updated accordingly.

Finally the FLE of the next most 'successful' LM was used to test this iteration of the template. This was found to allow me to apply the structural *a priori* framework but also easily allow the looser, emergent interpretation to take place which was the reason for the selection of the approach (King, 2012). At this stage it was decided that the initial FLE template was complete and all FLE interviews were then coded using this as the starting point.

The LM template followed the same approach, though the predefined first and second order codes were created from the *a priori* constructs, the familiarisation stage and the final template, which existed from the completed FLE interview coding. The FLEs were coded first as consideration of the research question made me think that having a better awareness of FLEs' perspectives would provide greater insight when subsequently coding the discretion of LMs.

3.2.2.3 Refining the Template

Once the initial FLE template was developed, coding of all FLEs took place and once this was complete the LMs' interviews were then coded. FLE interviews were coded in the following order: above average FLEs from above average LMs; below average FLEs from above average LMs; above average FLEs from below average LMs; and below average FLEs from below average LMs. LM interviews were coded with the above average LMs first and the below average LMs second. All coding took place

using a methodical approach intended to help me develop in a systematic way from an understanding of what was happening in the case to a better appreciation of why some of this would be happening (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Partington, 2000; Danermark et al., 2006; King, 2012; Edwards et al., 2014).

The refinement of the template took place gradually throughout the coding process as advised by King (2012) and reflected my understanding, moving from organising the data to interpreting it (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). As coding took place, and following the guidance of King (2012), the number of codes was allowed to grow and expand as new, different or differing accounts emerged from the data. This happened as I was careful to accommodate previously undocumented accounts or insights from interviewees alongside my own growing appreciation and understanding of the wider concepts emerging from the data.

This was done methodically by firstly the use of parallel coding to classify interviewee accounts into two or more different codes as my understanding of concepts within the data were developed (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). Then, when these concepts had been allowed to emerge, the updated template was then applied to each new interview transcript, and retrospectively to the transcripts that had been coded previously, with particular care taken to understand the part played by the HRM system and practices in explaining, or not, the things I was seeing in the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Partington, 2002; Bazeley & Jackson, 2013) and the differences between FLEs or LMs based on the known performance outcomes they had achieved (Edwards et al., 2014:169).

Throughout this insertion of new codes, deletion of old codes and alteration to first and second order classification was taking place (King, 2012). This allowed firstly the development of FLE discretionary activity, referring to the agency, freedom and choice which an FLE has when carrying out their responsibilities and which they can give or withdraw as they choose (Boxall & Purcell, 2008:23; Edwards et al., 2014). Then I was able to develop initial listings of individual LM discretionary practices, here meaning the identified and understood actions, attitudes, behaviours and choices regulated by the judgement of the individual LM and which are understood to be intended to influence FLEs' attitudes, behaviours and activity (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007:3; Boxall &

Purcell, 2008:23; Edwards et al., 2014). FLE Discretionary activities and LM discretionary practices, which were grouped, regrouped, added to, collated, reduced and ultimately refined, formed the bulk, but not all, of the emerging template.

Shared categories between LMs and FLEs emerged quickly though as the understanding of these and the context increased these were revised and reordered into thematically related clusters of discretionary practices. These were grouped together further into what became the four key groupings of discretionary practice clusters *cultivates team environment, shapes FLE focus, develops FLE ecosystem* and *provides FLE shielding.* Structural influences, HRM system and HRM practices, as well as other types of agency of LMs and FLEs, which did not immediately belong to obvious, shared categories, were also recorded in the template. Some of these were LM discretionary practices not obviously connected to the direct, shared categories of the four main groupings of discretionary practices, however; instead they were LM discretionary practices involved in LMs managing their changing context. These ultimately became *produces team contextualisation*.

Finally the HRM system, the HRM practices which LMs had responsibility for and the ways that LMs used their discretion to meet these were developed into the groupings of HRM discretionary enactment; *literal, earnest, creative, interrupted* and *instructed.*

3.2.2.4 Finalising the Template

The purpose of the activity was not to create a final template, but to address the research question. Therefore the measure of completion was not the creation of a 'final' template but how closely I was to confidently answering my research question.

In order to do this once all the interviews were completed, I used a series of questions to check my understanding of the data. The transcripts, templates for FLEs and LMs and familiarisation notes were all reviewed and when I was satisfied that I was able to address my research question the process was stopped. This means that the versions of the FLE coding and the LM codes that had been created in their respective templates were the 'final' ones. By this point there was coding that documented my understanding of the context within Ochre Inc.; how FLEs used their discretion to achieve their performance targets; the discretionary interventions, which were the collected groupings

of discretionary practices LMs carried out to influence FLE discretion; how LMs and FLEs interacted with each other and other stakeholders in both Ochre Inc. and tango function; what HRM practice responsibilities LMs in the study had responsibility for; and how LMs were understood to use their discretion when enacting the HRM practices they had responsibility for.

However, as these findings were being documented, described and ultimately written up, new insights on my part emerged, leading to further adjustments and alterations. Therefore while I have no ideal or final templates to present, I did establish a clear understanding of how FLEs used their discretion to achieve their performance targets, and how LMs used discretionary interventions comprised of multiple discretionary practices to influence this FLE discretion. This understanding included the ways LMs within each dyad had influenced FLEs, as well as an emerging general understanding of the types of discretionary practices common across all those in the study, or localised among those who were above or below the average. I also developed a clear appreciation of how LMs in the study enacted their HRM practice responsibilities.

Therefore I do consider the process and templates used to report the findings capture the richness of the data I was privileged to collect.

3.2.2.5 Quality in Case Studies

Yin (2014:45) defines quality in case studies as arising from four related concepts: construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability. How I describe the ways I have sought to conform to these, along with a fifth consideration that I have added, that of the use of NVivo software as an analysis aid, are outlined below.

3.2.2.5.1 Construct validity

Yin (2014:46) defines this as "identifying correct operational measures for the concept being studied". I sought close input from my panel to support my translation from research design to fieldwork and analysis. Partington's (2002) framework was helpful in this, as was careful consideration of similar approaches made in the literature by Purcell et al. (2003) and Purcell & Hutchinson (2007). These tactics are advocated by Yin (2014:46) as methods for helping provide construct validity.

3.2.2.5.2 Internal validity

Yin (2014:46) defines this as "seeking to establish a causal relationship, whereby certain conditions are believed to lead to other conditions, as distinguished from spurious relationships". I worked to achieve this by including the accounts from the FLEs that LMs in the study are known to have influenced and the known outcomes these same FLEs achieved, in order to understand how LMs' accounts of the discretion they used led to these outcomes.

In addition, perspectives from other sources, which in this case were other HRM Business Partners were sought, one of whom was interviewed on aspects of the emergent findings as well as background information on the environment. Utilising Chell's (2012) approach to create focused interviews, which allow interviewees to speak at length about specific events, was also deliberately deployed to help interviewees speak beyond the "ritual explanation" (Yin, 2014:48), while allowing comparison within the case between different accounts.

I also sought data to explain what structural factors were in place that LMs would trigger or which influenced them. These things combined were intended to maximise the internal validity of this case.

3.2.2.5.3 External validity

Yin (2014:46) defines this as "defining the domain to which a study's findings can be generalised". Generalisation is not the purpose of this study, as it is addressing a nascent area of literature and seeks to add a theoretical explanation within this domain. In addition the study is viewed as the precursor to further studies to test and develop the theory that emerges from it.

However, despite these clear intentions, it is worth heeding Miles & Huberman's (1994) suggestion that qualitative researchers pay attention to transferability, which is the likelihood that patterns identified and explanations proposed may apply in other settings. In the context of this study that means transferability to the people management context. In that regard, great care has been taken to frame this study within that wider debate and address known gaps within it. This is hoped to provide some transferability to that literature.

3.2.2.5.4 Reliability

Yin (2014:14) defines this as "demonstrating that the operations of a study can be repeated with the same results". This is concerned with the efforts made by the researcher to minimise their errors and biases, rather than replicability (Yin, 2014:49).

I achieved this during the analysis phase in three ways. Firstly I worked closely with a School of Management colleague who is a lecturer and carries out training on data analysis using computer-aided analysis software. She helped me in making considered choices about how I set up then conducted my analysis, helping me check how I was interpreting and applying coding to my data.

Secondly I had three intense sessions with QSR International. This involved the trainer from QSR International connecting to my PC remotely and helping me interrogate my coding template. He included steps to check and understand the coding choices I was making, including carrying out steps to examine whether my coding illustrated undue bias on my part, during which he offered practical guidance and instruction for me to manage the way I was engaging with my data.

Finally I have worked hard to be rigorous by working closely with my panel, methodically and systematically documenting the steps I have taken and been transparent in how I made the choices I did, designed my study, undertook my fieldwork and analysed my data, as well as providing a clear account of the key steps undertaken in the study.

3.2.2.6 Use of Computer-aided Analysis Software in Case Studies

While software for analysis provides a useful platform for what can be a taxing and intense process, it cannot make judgements regarding data but is there as an aid to the efficient handling of the large volume of text my interviews had generated (King in Cassell & Symon, 2012; Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). Despite my own pragmatism for choosing to use this software, Bazeley & Jackson (2013) warn that there are concerns on the impact of computers in this area. Firstly these concern researchers becoming distanced from the data.

My approach, however, involved an intense relationship with my data, contrary to this. Beginning with intense familiarisation, my approach took pains to accommodate

emerging themes within my data at an empirical and abstract level, as outlined above. Therefore the software was chosen to support closeness to my data, rather than detachment from it. Secondly there is concern regarding code-and-retrieve methods to the exclusion of other analytics. During findings analysis and write-up I drew upon some of the visualisation options within the software, but this was to provide insight to existing ideas rather than using them as the source of idea generation. Finally mechanisation of analysis, which I hope I have shown, was not an approach I undertook.

My analysis occupied several months as I worked methodically with an intensive engagement with the data so I was, as suggested by Edwards et al. (2014:169) 'moving beyond locally contingent processes to reveal…a narrative which explains patterns and causes'.

3.3 Methodology Chapter Summary

This chapter documented my choices and methods used to develop a study to answer the research questions. I outlined how I evaluated and formed a judgement on what was carried out which was outlined in the two sections that made up this chapter.

The first section addressed four decisions made to develop the empirical inquiry: the selection of a critical realist approach and why this was adopted as a philosophical approach; the type of research question being asked and the methodological fit between it and the current literature; the purpose of the study as a DBA empirical study for the aims that it has; and finally the research design arrived at and a rationale for choosing a qualitative case study and decisions made turning this into a working study.

The second section addresses two stages in carrying out the empirical study: how the fieldwork which was a single holistic case study set within a single function in a large organisation and which examined the dyad between LMs and their direct FLEs was undertaken; and how the data analysis, using template analysis was carried out. This resulted in findings which explain how LMs used their people management discretion in order to influence individual FLE performance outcomes. In addition there are findings on how LMs used their discretion to enact HRM practices identified in the study.

These findings will now be presented in Chapter 4 which sets the case study context, Chapter 5 which explains how LMs used their people management discretion in order to influence individual FLE performance outcomes and Chapter 6 which explains how LMs used their discretion to enact HRM practices identified in the study.

4 The Research Context

This chapter is presented as an introduction to the findings to provide insight into the complex contextual environment found within tango function and Ochre Inc. in the period during which the study was addressing, the financial period (the fiscal), between June 2013 and June 2014 (FY14). A detailed examination of the context was included in the design of the study as "we cannot consider how HRM and performance are linked without analysing, in some detail, how policy is translated into practice through the lens of the informal organization" (Truss 2001:1146). Having done this, it is then achievable, by comparing and contrasting at various levels, to work within the complexities of organisations (Truss 2001:1146). As stated in the literature, this is because LMs do not influence FLEs in isolation, as other environmental factors will influence FLEs as well, such as HRM practices that exist in the workplace and for which LMs have little or no responsibility, other managers, and the culture and environment of the organisation in general.

This understanding of the context informed my understanding of the materials examined and the accounts provided by those in the study. It is hoped that providing a brief overview of these contextual factors will help to frame the identified LM discretionary interventions explained in Chapter 5 and the LM discretionary enactment of HRM practices explained in Chapter 6, and how these explain how LMs used their discretion to influence the performance outcomes of the FLEs in the study.

4.1 Case Study Organisation – Overview

The context found was one in which it is understood that the achievement of results above other considerations were a priority. Within this environment, which a number of interviewees described as 'brutal', there were changes in the way FLEs were expected to sell to customers were also underway with a resultant impact on them and their LMs.

Ochre Inc. is headquartered in Silicon Valley and in the period of data gathering and analysis it was among the largest software and technology makers and providers in the world. Since 2010, Ochre Inc. has pursued an aggressive plan for increased turnover and profitability through organic growth and the acquisition of dozens of companies. Between 2010 and the period when the case study ended, turnover and net profit have

grown by over $10bn and $5bn respectively, placing the research during a period of continued pressure for growth and the integration of multiple, newly acquired organisations. It also took place during the final year of the outgoing CEO and the start of a new managerial regime.

4.1.1 Ochre Inc. UK and Tango Division

Tango division, the largest function in the UK within EMEA, is led by 'David Oswald' who has risen within Ochre Inc. and the study took place during his second full year in charge. This was during a period of pressure from 'corporate' to "grow the business" (source: background interviews). Of his 12 direct reports, six were selected for the study, as detailed in Figure 19.

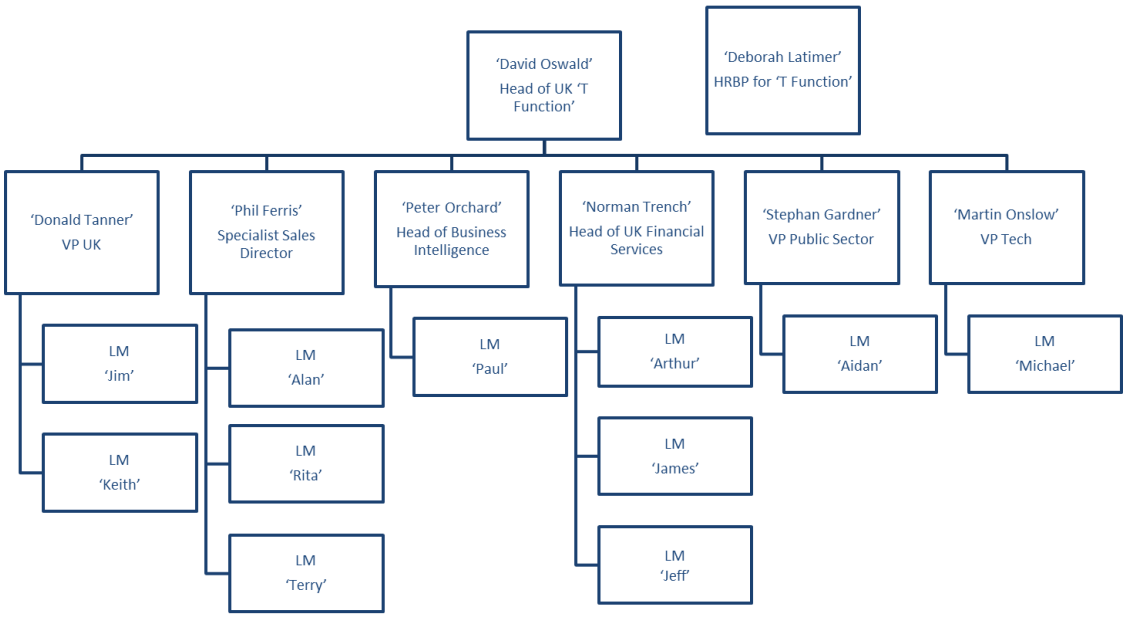

Figure 19 Ochre 'UK Tango Division' Included in the Study

4.2 Case Study – Structures

Using the data from the study structures, the "embedded practices and relationships" (Edwards et al., 2014:88), are formed over time and understood to have affected how LMs used their people management discretion to influence the outcomes of their FLEs and through which the LMs were identified. Of interest to this study were the informal structures, i.e. cultural or behavioural norms, such as how people work together or how

different functional teams interact with each other, which make up the organisational environment and the formal structures, such as rules or procedures, which together form a bureaucracy within which LMs and FLEs had to operate. This also included the operationalisation of Ochre Inc.'s strategy for growth, the cross functional agenda, which led to significant formal and informal changes.

As well as structures found within Ochre Inc., the study identified structures outside Ochre Inc. which were also understood to have influenced LMs' discretion caused by customer agendas. As with the internal structures, these included formal structures, such as legal requirements, and informal structures such as behavioural norms when dealing with customers. In total three categories of internal structures and one of external structure relevant to the research question were identified.

4.2.1 Internal Structure – Environment

The environment in Ochre Inc., here described as the non-formal environment factors that include culture, shared habits and norms that are "social arrangements" (Berger & Luckmann, 1991:66) which arise over time, were described as both impactful and challenging in terms of their effect on LMs' and FLEs' discretion during the time of the period of the case study. Some of these environmental structures appear to have been a consequence of the rapid growth that Ochre Inc. had undergone prior to the start of the study. Empirically, more LMs and FLEs in tango function failed to achieve their target than achieved it during the case study period, but because the overall function achieved the target, it had the overall message which was that the case study year had been a success as growth and profitability targets had been met.

However, inside Ochre Inc. was reported as being a stressful environment. This arose, firstly, from the reported behaviour of senior LMs. While there was a mix of complimentary and critical descriptions of the LMs in the study from their FLEs and from the HRM business partners included in the 'background interviews', the LMs, FLEs and one of the HRM business partners were all critical of a number of those managers who were more senior than the LMs in the study. Some negative perceptions came from the replacement of two popular senior managers who left during the period of the case study, 'Donald Tanner' and 'Peter Orchard', with two highly unpopular

senior managers. Known, as well as managed, by those within the study, 'Donald Tanner' in particular was respected as well as popular for his style and manner.

> *"[Donald Tanner] going…..they should have cloned him. You know, they should have made other managers learn from him." Colin – FLE*

As well as being viewed by many as a role model, the way 'Donald Tanner' left was viewed with criticism.

> *"Because you could see what was happening….. David [Oswald] was f***** stuff around with the account…….and then, and this is where 'Donald' [Tanner] left as well….[he] left quite soon after, because he said he could not see the number [Ochre Inc. shorthand for 'target']. He said 'as soon as you cannot see the number, you want to b***** off'." Keith – LM*

Neither of those who replaced these popular managers received any positive comments from those in the study.

> *"Honestly? Waste of space. Pointless." Rita – LM*

Another senior manager, 'Norman Trench', also received highly critical comments from those in the study. As well as individuals singled out for criticism, the behaviour overall of senior managers was perceived as lacking openness and fairness both in decisions and behaviours. A tendency of senior managers to protect those they liked, regardless of whether they were good performers or not, was a common suspicion; for example, in the influence they had and used for influencing which FLE did or did not get credit for a large sale based on favouritism, something that affected three of the 11 managers directly, though a critical and distrustful perception of Ochre Inc. senior managers emerged from the majority of those interviewed.

This was also viewed as the source for reported high attrition among LMs and FLEs prior to and during the time of the case study.

> *"We had a little bit of attrition last year, we looked at some of the stats that came out, and something came out that said, you know, we could have potentially saved 50% of those individuals…..I'm not quite sure [about] the*

support that was being given at that time if that makes sense." Deborah – HRMBP

Therefore overall there was a critical view of the behaviours of senior LMs generally within tango function during FY14, with a consequent impact on the overall environment, and which was viewed by those in the study as contributing to internal tensions, conflict and increased FLE attrition.

The second aspect of environment which influenced LM people management discretion arose from the norm of prioritisation of financial results ahead of other considerations. It was clear from those in the study that there was intense pressure during the case study period to meet targets that had also grown considerably.

"You know, you've got this great big pressure to do your number, to be seen to be successful……..which just makes getting to your number even more difficult." Arthur – LM

This was perceived by many as coming ahead of fair treatment of customers or FLEs. Customers were described as being bullied in order to agree to purchase products using legal obligations they had unwittingly accrued, described as 'gun in mouth' or 'gun to the head' deals. FLE considerations were described as secondary to the pursuit of challenging financial targets. LMs who could not deliver results were rumoured to have been fired, affecting LM morale.

"And it used to be the case that you can do the right thing and not get fired, even if you do not get the results, but if you … it's now a case…..and I think that's what happened at XXXXXX [Ochre Sector Team]…..the numbers were so highly stacked and there were some deals that were done that were just like wow, we just pulled this out of the blue and they doubled their number. So no matter what you did you were not successful so it had a huge impact on individuals. And, you know, that … I think that did affect me as well." Cary – FLE

The pressure in this area grew considerably during the quarterly review process, where the need to report short term success as part of a listed company created a tension with the longer time frames that larger deals, required by Ochre Inc. as part of the strategy during the case study period, required.

This led to internal pressures and conflicts as differing stakeholders prioritised their own objectives at the expense of others while this tension created by the new strategy was realised. The incoming CEO exacerbated this pressure through public announcements that FLEs and LMs "were not up to the job" and needed to "hustle harder".

While achievement of success was a significant focus, during the period of the case study only 40% of FLEs in tango function achieved their personal target, although less than 35% of individual FLEs achieved their target even though tango function achieved 100%, but because the overall number was achieved, the result was viewed as a success.

This provides an overall impression that during the case study period tango function was an environment where results were the priority when making decisions or carrying out activities.

The third and final aspect of environment which influenced LMs' people management discretion arose from silo behaviours, meaning groups of individuals in departments acting against other internal groups. This was not described widely but in areas that involved US interference with those in EMEA or when other parts of EMEA were trying to work together on complex and large customer deals. Each was described by LMs and FLEs as leading to conflicts and aggressive behaviour between peers and levels, based around conflict over credit for deals. While FLEs described a great deal of energy and effort made by them and others to minimise the impact of this while working within cross lines of business (cross functional) matrix teams, there were multiple reports of conflicts arising over the share of the overall sale awarded to individuals. As well as disruptive to productivity and goodwill, there were also reports that this led to heightened levels of stress for LMs' FLEs within the study.

Therefore the overall consensus that emerged was an environment where there was constant pressure to succeed and where aggressive behaviours in pursuit of this between departments or individuals were tolerated in pursuit of success.

"It can get very ugly very quickly. Very ugly. Brutal." Cary – FLE

Coupled with an HRM Function also undergoing change, the strong impression is that in the period which the case was examining that tango function had an environment that

prioritised results over people, which affected morale and LM and FLE attrition (source: LM, FLE and background interviews).

However, while the consensus was of a challenging, and at times brutish environment, it was not universally unpopular: though this was mainly a view held by those in the study who had achieved a successful FY14.

4.2.2 Internal Structure – Bureaucracy

The structure categorised as bureaucracy involved time-consuming processes, practices and procedures, formed from a mix of formal and informal structures. Examples included the type and number of meetings; the need to submit multiple or duplicate copies or versions of highly detailed activity reports; multiple cataloguing of potential deal revenue; complicated mix of products being sold and rules governing these; and the complex mix of legal rules, jurisdictional rules, commercial rules and wide range of departments involved, all with their own procedures.

This high volume of continuous reporting, duplicate reporting and re-reporting, monitoring and involvement from so many departments, especially on the larger deals that were becoming the norm during the time of the case study, took up a significant amount of time and effort of LMs and their FLEs.

> *"Ochre is a beast; the way I think about Ochre Inc.is …it's a beast…….it has a lot of, um, issues that you need to deal with as from process to egotistical individuals, to unpleasant individuals quite frankly, and all those types of things." Paul – LM*

Bureaucracy was reported as lacking alignment with strategic needs and inhibiting what LMs and FLEs felt they needed to do in order to be successful as it was both time-consuming and the source of internal tension or conflict. For example each FLE had to attend a Quarterly Review Board (QRB) meeting for all potential deals along with their LM plus everyone else involved in the deal, which could mean other FLEs who are part of their matrix team and their associated LMs. These meetings were reported as formal, challenging and sometimes aggressive events.

The consequence of this was people management discretion being used to place thought and effort in order to sufficiently prepare adequately, as failure to do so could lead to bureaucracy for the LM and the FLE after the meeting, adding to their already high workloads, or tensions inside the matrix team or with senior stakeholders. This led to internal barriers, which undermined the efforts by LMs and FLEs to work collaboratively and productively with others inside Ochre Inc., in the informal matrix team that were a significant feature of deals during the period of the case study.

> *"Most of the managers, and the systems they use, [they're] not right." Paul – LM*

As well as influencing planning and operational management, formal systems also directly influenced and affected who got paid, with four of the FLEs reporting circumstances during the period of the study where the deal they had successfully completed did not translate into payment because of rule changes that excluded them from being rewarded for their efforts. Consequently some FLEs lost many thousands of pounds, creating a challenge for them personally and financially. This happened particularly on cross-border working where it led to a strongly perceived 'systemic' bias in favour of the US from the perspective of those in the UK. This was because it allowed FLEs to develop opportunities in the UK but find that these were credited to those in the US.

As well as creating ill will and consuming time, as LMs and FLEs challenged what were reported as opaque decisions, these could carry significant financial consequences for those involved.

> *"And what you actually have……..is I run a lot of American banks so the money is…Ochre sets geographies against each other so you're competitive…..so a lot of your number is out of your control because a lot of decisions are taken in the States." Pete – FLE*

Therefore a number of 'bureaucratic structures' were found which appeared to influence both LMs and FLEs within the study. This appeared to impact on LMs in terms of their own tasks, but a lot of the impact appears in how it affected the ways they were required to deal with their FLEs, such as the disruption of internal conflict which could upset or

demotivate FLEs but also inhibit their abilities to resolve matters or their opportunities to succeed – all of which influenced the LMs' use of their people management discretion to solve or work around these various challenges.

4.2.3 Internal Structure – Cross Functional Agenda

The cross functional agenda (across different functions and lines of business within Ochre Inc.) describes the structure which arose from the strategic decision made by the management team of Ochre Inc. in early 2011 on how the organisation and all the sales teams within it were to operate when selling Ochre Inc. products and services to their customers. This strategy was developed and championed by the incoming senior management team being made ready to take over from the retiring CEO during the case study time period. The cross functional agenda was intended to substantially increase Ochre Inc.'s sales and profitability even further by forcing front line sales FLEs to sell more products and services to each individual customer.

Firstly it involved all FLEs, and having *larger targets.* Targets were increased substantially in the period up to and including the period of the case study and the rationale for this was simply that in order to achieve the new larger targets, sales people had to find ways to make each customer buy more than before.

Secondly FLEs, in order to achieve the larger sales targets, were forced to work across functional lines of business (hence, cross functional). The logic behind this was if the larger sales targets were to be achieved, each customer had to be persuaded to spend more for each sale. To do this, FLEs had to find ways of bundling a mix of products together so that the sale could be made larger. FLEs were encouraged to work together in informal matrix teams to coalesce together around a sales opportunity with each customer, the value creation deal, so they could use their discretion to find ways to convince the customer to buy more products within each 'deal'. Each matrix team was comprised of people from different parts of tango function and other functions from the UK and other countries.

Thirdly the rationale that first line sales people were to use to persuade customers to buy these larger bundles also changed. This was called moving to *value creation* instead of *value capture*. Prior to and including the year which the case study examines, the first

line sales FLEs were strongly encouraged to change the way they sold their products to customers. A value capture deal meant the FLE responding to a predetermined customer need, while value creation meant the first line sales FLEs were instead encouraged to link the buying of a greater volume of Ochre Inc. products and services with the solution to a major business or organisational problem that the customer had. This was a significant difference in the skills and abilities that were required by FLEs.

Fourthly, every matrix team first line sales FLE team member would be working together to collaborate and coordinate their shared efforts but had to adapt and adjust to working towards a *team result* but still be measured and rewarded on an *individual result* basis, rather than the overall matrix team result. This meant that each team member often had a personal incentive for their product to have a prominent position within each value creation deal, even if this was detrimental to or at odds with the product mix that best suited the customer or the success of the deal. This required enhanced team working skills and abilities, created motivational challenges and offered incentives for other FLEs to limit opportunities for other team members.

Fifthly, FLEs were required to change who they typically dealt with in customers and *'sell to the business'*, which meant identifying and influencing non-IT buyers, 'the business'. This was a change from what was typical for many years prior to cross functional working, which involved identifying and selling IT solutions to IT buyers in customer organisations. Selling to 'the business' involved FLEs uncovering organisational problems which the Ochre Inc. bundle of products or services, 'the solution', could then be matched against so that the customer spent a larger amount of money and acquired the larger 'deal'. This also called for new skills and approaches so that the FLEs had the ability, but also the opportunity, to succeed in this new way of working.

Finally, cross functional deals meant an increase in *'pool of funds'* or *'unlimited licence agreement' (ULA) deals*. These are the types of agreement used when selling a cross functional 'solution' and are large, complicated and long-term contracts that typically cover a period of three years during which customers agree to purchase a minimum, usually large, amount of bundled products or services from Ochre Inc. These also called for upskilling of FLEs but also increased substantially the exposure of bureaucracy and

'environmental' effects that FLEs were exposed to. Cross functional was viewed as a success prior to and during the period the study examined, as Ochre Inc. had grown its turnover and profits substantially under this strategy. Some very large deals were secured using this approach including one during the case study period which involved one of the FLEs in the study and consequently their LMs and which was the 'largest deal Ochre Inc.'s ever done' (Source: Alan – LM). However the change to cross functional also appears to have created significant 'structural' effects that influenced how LMs used their people management discretion.

4.2.4 External Structure – Customer Agendas

Customer agendas were reported from all the LMs and 20 of the 23 FLEs, and included 'customer choice on the timing when a deal or sale was completed'; 'customers exercising their right to reject products at any time'; 'customers having an existing negative perception of Ochre Inc.'; and 'customers using Ochre Inc.'s short-term pressures to their own advantage'. These could arise for formal reasons, such as rules dictating when a customer could choose to complete a deal, or for informal reasons, such as individuals or groups within the customer had intentions or perspectives about a purchasing decision which did not coincide with that of the FLEs in the study, their LMs, or Ochre Inc. Examples included customers not wanting to buy within a timescale that Ochre Inc. desired and customers having a negative view of Ochre Inc., because of some action carried out by an agent of the organisation in the past, which impacted on their buying decision and hindered attempts to try and achieve agreement to complete a sale.

> *"So he just had a massive bee in his bonnet with Ochre. He thought well if I can screw an Ochre deal I'll do it, and that's what he did." Michael – LM*

This was sometimes used intentionally by customers as a negotiation tactic to pressure LMs or FLEs for more advantageous terms for a deal. Customers used knowledge of the high pressure they knew LMs and FLEs were under to close deals as quickly as possible inside Ochre Inc. to achieve terms for deals to their advantage.

> *"So when the customer says to me….I know that you're working towards a, eh, your, your quarter end year end……customers are quite wise to that. You know,*

some of our bigger customers might not do anything up until the last few weeks of the financial year except quarterly. That might allow them to achieve better commercials." Amir – FLE

4.2.5 FLE Performance Outcomes

Within Ochre Inc. what constituted performance was whether an FLE achieved their individual sales target or not. At the start of each financial year (the 'fiscal') each FLE was given an individual target (the 'number'). By the end of each 'fiscal', each FLE must have sold enough of the product or products they had responsibility for to the customers they were allowed to sell to, which had to total 100% or more of their 'number'. The source of this 'number' was the overall 'number' given to the head of tango function by the head of EMEA. This was provided at the 'fiscal' and was subdivided to his direct senior managers, who the line managers (LMs) in the study reported to, after he used his own discretion to increase it by 10% to add a 'buffer', added to minimise the risk that he missed his target.

"David's [Oswald – head of tango) number is less than the sum of the reps number. I believe David used to hand down either a 5 or 10% buffer i.e. if his number was 100 then the sum of his direct reports would be 105 or 110." Arthur – LM

This was then subdivided by the senior managers who used their own discretion to choose how to distribute it between the LMs who reported to them. Finally, each LM (including the 11 in this study) used their people management discretion to divide this between each of the FLEs within their team. No additional 'buffer' was thought to have been added during these sub divisions.

"There was only the one uplift - at the 'David' level." Arthur – LM

Sometimes this is done in consultation between the line members and team members, with FLEs whose accounts are expected to do particularly well in that 'fiscal' receiving a larger percentage of the overall number than those with accounts not expected to do well; or the LM can do this in isolation, or it can be a consultation with just a selection of team members. However, the achievement of this target by individual FLEs is the performance that is examined in this study.

4.3 Research Context Chapter Summary

During the period the case study examined, the financial year 2013-2014, referred to throughout the document as FY14, a lot of changes had already happened in Ochre Inc. but were still taking place. The changes, reflected in the structures, affected how LMs used their people management discretion. Pressure for growth from US and UK senior managers, the challenges associated with cross functional working, the shift from value capture to value creation and the increase in their FLEs working in matrix teams, created a series of challenges they had to resolve while influencing FLE performance. In particular they created changes in the way that their FLEs were expected to operate with customers and also how they needed to operate within Ochre Inc. This created demands on FLEs and consequently demands on the way LMs used their people management discretion to find ways to help their FLEs understand, acclimatise to and also become skilled in these new circumstances and ways of working during the period that the case study examined.

This overview of these contextual factors is provided to help frame the identified LM discretionary interventions of groupings' discretionary practices explained in Chapter 5 and the LM discretionary enactment of HRM practices explained in Chapter 6, and how these explain how LMs used their discretion to influence the performance outcomes of the FLEs in the study.

5 LM People Management Non-HRM Practice Discretionary Interventions to Influence Individual FLE Performance Outcomes

This chapter presents the case study findings from the analysis of interviews with 11 LMs, 23 of their direct report FLEs, 2 supporting HRM business partners. Here I address the research question by explaining how LMs in the study were understood to have used their people management non-HRM practice related discretion to carry out interventions understood to have been intended to influence FLE performance outcomes which were achieved by the end of FY14. These discretionary interventions are understood to have taken place through a number of identified non-HRM practice enactment related LM discretionary practices.

Each was categorised and grouped together based on the understood intention or purpose they had. How this was done is illustrated in Figure 20.

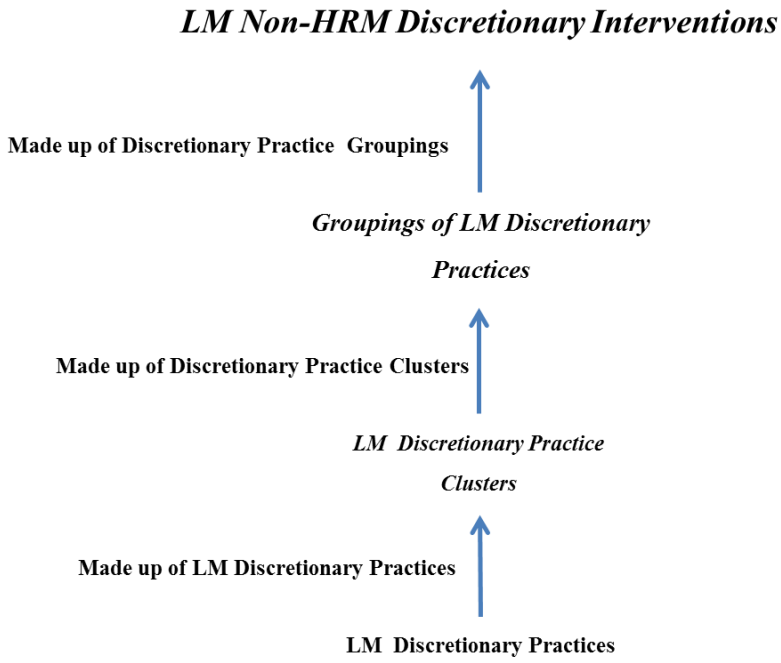

Figure 20 Taxonomy of LM Non-HRM People Management Discretion Findings

Five different groupings of LM discretionary practice types were identified: produces team contextualisation; cultivates team environment; shapes FLE focus; develops FLE ecosystem; and provides FLE shielding. These findings which are a summary of the

findings on how the LMs in tango function within Ochre Inc. had used their people management discretion to influence the discretionary activity of the FLEs within their team that these FLEs used in pursuit of their individual performance outcomes, are presented in summary in Table 11.

Table 11 Summary of Non-HRM LM People Management Discretion

LM Non-HRM Discretionary Interventions	Groupings of Clusters	LM Discretionary Practice Clusters
Produces Team Contextualisation	Designing Directed Endeavour	Establishing aims, priorities and needs
	Designing Social Endeavour	Sets standards and expectations
		Defines required team dynamic
	Designing Capability for Endeavour	Defines team capability needed
		Incorporates considerations of FLE development
Cultivates Team Environment	Influencing the Dynamic within the Group	Team building
		Creating a 'safe' space
		Encouraging team to problem solve
	Influencing the Dynamic between LM and Individual FLEs	Maintaining individual motivation
		Being available for FLEs
		Relationships with FLEs
	Influencing the Dynamic between LM and Overall Group	Building credibility
		Protecting from external pressure
Shapes FLE Focus	Prioritisation Management	Setting priorities
		Encouraging long term thinking but pragmatic thinking
	Focusing FLE Activity Management	Helping FLE time management
		Monitoring FLE activity
Develops FLE Ecosystem	Providing Cross Functional Guidance	Helping manage customers in a matrix team
		Supporting FLEs' internal network building
		Guidance on 'matrix team' working
		Involving 'matrix team' members
Provides FLE Shielding	Shadowing Deals	Influencing LMs or other FLEs
		Protecting FLE allocations
	Influencing Upwards	'Sandbagging' (hiding) information from senior managers to protect FLEs
		Relationship management between LM and direct superior

How LMs addressed their HRM responsibilities through their HRM practice-related discretionary interventions through their discretionary HRM practice enactment was examined separately and these findings are presented in Chapter 6. In the following sections I will now detail in turn how each of the identified five groupings of discretionary practices were described being used by LMs, how this is understood to have influenced the discretionary activity of FLEs, and how this explains how FLE's achieved their individual performance outcomes in FY14.

5.1 Produces Team Contextualisation

Produces team contextualisation is a finding of the study and is an aspect of LM people management discretion. *Produces team contextualisation* is a collection of groupings of LMs' people management discretionary practices which are understood to explain how the LMs' appreciation of their context in tango function in FY14 led to them adjusting, shaping and re-ordering how they carried out their people management discretion during FY14. These are gathered together in groupings of discretionary practices related by the understanding of their shared intent of outcome or purpose, and given names that reflect these understanding. These groupings of discretionary practices were understood to have been used by LMs to establish the objectives their teams would be focused on achieving, the standards they would adhere to, the working dynamic the team would operate by, the capabilities team members needed and how the capability gaps would be addressed. These groupings of discretionary practices are *designing directed endeavour*, *designing social endeavour*, and *designing capability for endeavour*.

These discretionary practices were identified from the accounts of the LMs in the study mostly, and were recognised as judgements, choices, decisions and steps that were carried out that involved the LM adapting or adjusting how they used their overall people management discretion as a consequence of these contextual changes.

The nature of some of these reported changes have been briefly outlined in Chapter 4: the cross functional agenda; intense pressure from senior managers to pursue growth; an increase in FLE targets and the move to value creation deals. As a result of these changes there was understood to be some impact on how LMs' teams operated, which it is understood led to LMs having to do things differently from what they had been doing before. One of these differences relevant for this study was the model of an LM's team's construction altering by the start of FY14. In the years before the introduction of cross functional working, each FLE was understood to have worked individually when dealing with customer organisations and interacting directly with corporate buyers who were IT operators or professional. These customer stakeholders were described by LMs and FLEs in the study but are stakeholders from whom no data were sought or have been included in this study. The way LMs and FLEs worked prior to FY14 is illustrated in Figure 21.

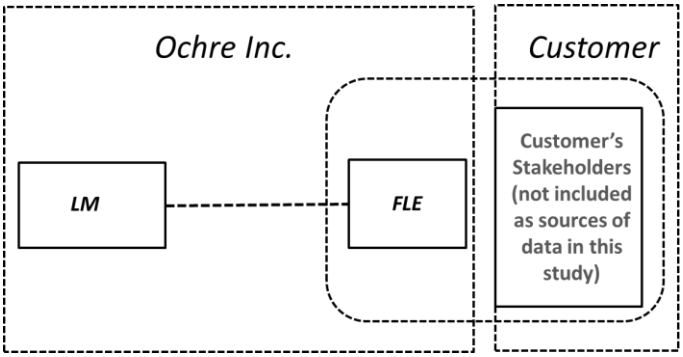

Figure 21 Pre Cross functional Model of FLE and Customer Interface

With the reported change during the year immediately prior to the start of the study to cross functional working and value creation selling, this style of customer interface is understood to have become more complicated as FLEs were now expected to work alongside other FLEs from different parts of tango function as well as other functions within Ochre Inc., working together in informal matrix teams.

This new model of working was reportedly in place by the start of the period that the study examined but was still relatively new in FY14. This new model of working is represented by Figure 22.

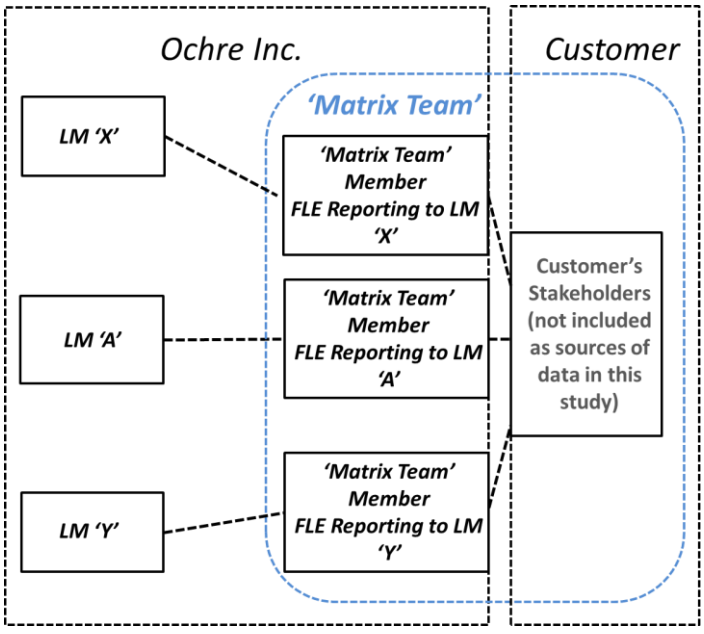

Figure 22 'Cross functional Matrix Team Model of FLE and Customer Interface

In this example LM 'A' would have an FLE from within their team working in an informal matrix team alongside FLEs from LMs 'X' and 'Y'. The numbers of FLEs in a

matrix team reportedly varied based on the type of 'deal' and the discretionary choice of the team members, who would also determine how the team was structured and organised. This is understood to have meant changes to 'norms' of people management LM discretion as they found ways of making this work function effectively, including ways to develop the skills and abilities FLEs needed to work in this new way, maintain FLE motivation and make sure FLEs were assured of opportunities in this new operational paradigm. LMs are understood to have had to accommodate all these changes in how they used their people management discretion prior to and during FY14.

In addition to this, LMs reported having to find ways to overcome challenges created by an FLE reward system which is understood to have heavily incentivised individual achievement rather than team achievement. This is understood to have meant that during FY14 when an FLE achieved 100% of their target, based on the value of their product within an overall value creation deal, they reported this meant they received the same value as their original base salary.

> *"So [on achieving your number] they take your base salary… if you're on err 75 then your OTE with 100% will be another 75, so that's 150,000, so that's, that's, that's if you do 100%." Jasper – FLE*

When they exceeded 100% of their target they are understood to receive an additional reward based on a percentage of the overall value of their product within the value creation deal.

> *"So I have to do 2.7 million um and then they pro rata a percentage of that 2.7 million to do the 75, so that's like 2.9364 something. .....as I climb up to that, so at zero to 50 it's like 1%, at um, you know, 50 to 75, 75 to 100 it's growing to a sort of 2%." Jasper – FLE*

The percentage of reward reportedly increased the further above their individual target an FLE was.

> *"Then as you go through it kicks right up, so it kicks to say 5 and then as you go over 150% it can go to like 6.9% of everything that you close. So at that point you're taking £69,000 for every million pounds that you close." Jasper – FLE*

Therefore 'Jasper' as an example is understood to have achieved c$4.6m in sales, which was 171% of his $2.7 million dollar target which meant he is understood to have received c£315,000 for his individual performance against his target for FY14. This is a substantial amount of money to most people. It was reported that this resulted in tensions and conflict within matrix teams which was left to the matrix team members but also to LMs to try to oversee and resolve.

However, it is understood that during FY14 the forming and managing of matrix teams, through the use of their own discretion while overcoming the reward and other systemic barriers, made their operation problematic. All the LMs reported using their people management discretion to find ways trying to make sure this approach worked effectively. The majority of FLEs also reported using their own discretion to find ways of making the matrix team system work effectively.

> *"My contract does not talk about cross line of business or any of those things. Those are the sorts of things that I'll implement in order to deliver upon the terms within my contract." Sid – FLE*

This meant that LMs are understood to have used their people management discretion to be involved in managing the 'team environment' in a way that supported FLEs acquiring the skills needed to operate with different stakeholders in customers, who would no longer solely be from the customers' IT function in addition to helping their FLEs develop the skills and abilities for collaborating, co-ordinating and negotiating internally with other sales FLEs as well as other Ochre Inc. stakeholders while constructing a large value creation deal. Throughout, they had to make sure that their FLEs remained motivated in this more challenging environment and that despite systemic or other structural challenges, that FLEs were still able to have the opportunity to use their discretion in ways advantageous to them in achieving their individual FLE performance targets.

Each of these findings will now be explained in detail.

5.1.1 Designing Directed Endeavour

All 11 LMs in the study used a variety of the discretionary practices which were related by the common aim of *establishing aims, priorities and needs* and which together

comprised the grouping *designing directed endeavour*. Some of these discretionary practices were commonplace among all the LMs in the study, some among the majority while others were used by half or less. Each of the discretionary practices found involved LMs taking deliberate steps to 'intervene' in the discretionary activity of their direct FLEs by contextualising the overall aims and priorities that they and the FLEs in their teams needed to achieve within the context of the changes taking place in their environment.

Whether they were above or below average performing LMs, all in the study agreed that cross functional working, while strategically logical and beneficial, brought challenges and difficulties through its execution which they had to address in the way they managed their teams and FLEs. There was a consensus from those in the study that this was challenging because within Ochre Inc. there was a lack of shared logic on how cross functional working ought to be done.

> *"So if you do it in the right way, and you do, you know you do hold yourself up to that we should work collaboratively, we should work cross line of business, and quite frankly some people don't." Paul – LM*

This included unclear 'rules' on who should have credit for any given sale, how accounts ought to be distributed or managed through to a lack of coherence of how best to work within this new paradigm.

> *"Actually some people at all sorts of levels do not get it." Paul – LM*

Those in the study explained how the processes and systems in FY14 were incompatible with cross functional methods of working, leading directly to tensions. As mentioned in the incentive systems, but also during forecasting activity, the shift from short term results to long term timescales required of larger cross functional value creation deals conflicted with the expectations of senior managers and shareholders.

> *"Um, and you, it takes time, that's the challenge with that it takes time, and we do not necessarily have that amount of time." Paul – LM*

These challenges are understood to have been compounded as there was significant pressure to work in an cross functional way. Firstly this came from vastly increased targets.

> *"Putting it in context….I mean at the end of the year, we had grown 280% in the last four years, so….the target's had, kind of, gone up." Terry – LM*

Secondly this came from direct messaging from senior managers and David Oswald (head of 'tango') including a campaign suggesting cross functional deals had a higher rate of success.

> *"David [Oswald, Head of 'T'] could give you the stats. [He has told us that] if we have what we call a red stack, a whole bunch of modern Och-, err, four or five Ochre products, we'll win, I think his number is 78% of the time. If we're standalone, we win 24% of the time." Terry – LM*

The view from those in the study is that LMs were left to use their discretion to make the cross functional approach work. As well as being pressured to make cross functional working a success regardless of the difficulties, they had to do this while finding ways of maintaining morale and motivation within their teams as targets grew rapidly in a short space of time.

> *"You know you've got to start thinking to do things slightly differently." Alan – LM*

To deal with these changes, all 11 of the LMs in the study used their discretionary practice to evaluate the potential of the accounts available to them ('evaluate Ochre's aims, client potential and high level plans') and from this understanding to set out priorities and plans for their team ('set team direction, account priorities, strategies and stakeholder management plans). This was done in different ways between different LMs possibly due to differing LM styles with no discernible pattern emerging suggesting those above average LMs were doing anything significantly different from those below average. Nine of those interviewed provided evidence that the approach they took during FY14 was different because of cross functional and in particular the requirement for FLEs to achieve larger value creation deals than they had done in the past.

"They're [his team] obviously going to focus themselves on the large deals as well because they can do their number by…. being involved in one large deal." Michael – LM

This suggests most LMs were aware of and acknowledging how they carried out their discretionary practices was changing, especially around helping their FLEs identify, develop and secure value creation deals.

"How are they going to target their bigger customers, what sales propositions are we going to take in, in terms of the value, not just here's a product would you like it." Alan – LM

Seven of the 11 LMs expressed that how they approached understanding the aims of the team and preparing the team for the challenges faced in their context, came from their own judgement rather than any guidance from within Ochre Inc. or from 'official' sources of information.

"I might have been sent it! [job description]. But no, I've never even read it." Michael – LM

This suggests that a number of LMs in the study formed their opinion on how to handle these changes independently of any guidance from Ochre Inc. and suggests that there is a level of personal independence and determination among some of the LMs. There was also evidence that the focus and interest of senior managers was solely on performance outcomes and not how LMs or FLEs had to achieve these results, which also suggested a high degree of discretion available to LMs

"I mean clearly we are measured because we've got to make a number, but... how you get to that number, providing it's within the rules and within those processes, then that's down to you." Paul – LM

Finally, four of the LMs appear to have taken a slightly different approach from the others in the study. All were comfortable in using their discretion to evaluate their context and determine how they responded to it; however, these LMs viewed and treated their team as their own 'franchise'.

"The way I always refer to it is, you've got a franchise to sell Ochre Inc. We fund your activities to manage that franchise, but we're giving you, you know, we're giving you a popup shop here for, for 12 months, selling stuff that's made by Ochre Inc." Jim – LM

These LMs appeared comfortable with their freedom and seemed to view this should be used by them in an entrepreneurial way.

"You know you can be quite entrepreneurial if that's the way you want to operate. …do not try and change Ochre Inc. 'cause you cannot change it." Paul – LM

This group did not describe organisational structures as 'barriers' and instead described these as a normal part of the landscape which it would be up to them to navigate and operate within.

"You know but for the company to run its massive sales team, with all the complications…you know that...when you realise that you realise that…..you know you've got to go and do your own thing." Alan – LM

This 'stoic' approach to utilising the discretion available to them was only found in a small number of the LMs who were a mix of new and/or long-standing LMs. Of the four who described this outlook three were among those who had the highest number of successful FLEs within their team. This group, by taking this approach, appear to have been more comfortable with coping with the changes taking place in Ochre Inc.

Therefore, as outlined, there was a consensus across all LMs that these changes and pressures made this contextual review of aims, priorities and needs necessary. There were many different approaches taken in LM discretionary practice to achieve this, though all LMs are understood to have used discretionary practices in some way to review their context and determine the implications for the aims, priorities and needs required if through FLE discretionary activity FLE level performance outcomes were to be achieved. The only significant commonality of approach came from a small number of LMs who viewed their teams as a 'franchise' and understood they were to be entrepreneurial in how they used their people management discretion, meaning they appeared to run their team as if it were their 'own business', seeing the structures such

as bureaucracy and environment less as 'barriers' and more as objects through which they had to navigate, and who were typically LMs of the more successful teams.

5.1.2 Designing Social Endeavour

This LM discretionary intervention is comprised of two different types of people management discretionary practice understood to have taken place and grouped thematically with the common aim of *designing social endeavour*. The first *sets standards and expectations* came from the accounts of nine of the 11 LMs in the study and relates to the standards and expectations set by the LM for their team to follow that will support FLEs carrying out their discretionary activity likely to lead to individual performance outcomes.

> *"So my expectation was, you know, to really set the foundations and it was a, you know, a two year plan." Michael – LM*

LMs were understood to have had scope for setting out how their teams would operate which let them define many of the 'standards' that would apply. LMs carried out this discretionary practice to review and determine the rules, approaches, norms of behaviour, processes and approaches they wanted their FLEs to conform with. As well as setting rules and standards there were some variations in the way this discretionary practice was carried out: the frequency of reporting; the format of reporting; the style of interaction between the LM and each FLE; general processes to be used; and behavioural 'norms' between FLEs and each other.

> *"Create a team, a team spirit, a cohesive group of people and make the best of what we could in that financial year." Jeff – LM*

As long as they worked 'within the rules' and ultimately achieved their 'number' the LMs had significant freedom in how they carried out this 'discretionary practice. While these practices were something that nine of the 11 articulated doing, there was a broad variety of ways by which they could do this, none of which related to an obvious pattern related to FLE performance achieved. Three of the 11 LMs were explicit that an important priority was each individual in their team achieving their personal performance target.

"Right, you know such that, you know for instance you know my simple thing here is it's my job to get all of my guys past their quota." Alan – LM

LMs were measured by the overall financial performance of their team, not how many within it achieved their personal target.

"How are we going to get them over the line, what does it look like, yeah." Paul – LM

Therefore it was unusual that some LMs used their discretion to operate to a different standard, which was getting as many in their team as possible to succeed, though this does not mean other LMs who did not describe taking this approach did not also use this discretionary practice but did not report it during interview.

"So that's my job to make my nine people, erm, successful. Er, we'll work out what success means for each of them but I'll tell them what one of them is, and that's achieving your target." Jeff – LM

Though this study cannot state for certain that this approach was different from other LMs in the study, if this was a difference of discretionary practice it could suggest that when an LM is focused on the success of individuals in the group they may apply greater focus on the discretionary activity of individual FLEs within all in their team, compared to those who focused on the group as a whole, as the three LMs who used this discretionary practice were among those managing above average teams. These three LMs were all also those who viewed their team as their 'own business', which may also relate to why their approach could potentially have been to other LMs, though further study is needed to explore this further. Nevertheless this does provide evidence that some LMs in the study used the discretionary practice to operate to a standard based on individual FLE achievement of outcomes as their aim, which is likely to influence how they used their discretionary practices to influence the discretionary activity of their FLEs so these FLEs could achieve their individual performance outcomes.

The second discretionary practice, within the grouping *designing social endeavour* was identified as *defines required team dynamic*. Eight of the 11 LMs in the study explained that they used discretionary practices to align the dynamic, how their team operated as a complete 'unit', based on the demands of their context.

"It was to rebuild what we had and to, erm, er, to, you know, recruit additional people, to create a team, a team spirit, a cohesive group of people and make the best of what we could in that financial year." Jeff – LM

This is understood to have involved the LMs using their discretion to deliberately alter openness, trust, cohesion and motivation between team members as well as how the overall team as a 'group' acted based in order to meet the demands of the context.

"You can still make some of the team greater than some of the individuals, just by sharing good practice, sharing rumour, sharing innuendo, and things like that." Terry – LM

This included steps to make individuals within the team feel supported and also more confident in their own ability to succeed.

"We're more confident, my team are more confident." Alan – LM

This discretionary practice appears to have been carried out to define a team environment where people could relax and work together and therefore FLEs would use their own discretion to share knowledge as well as encouragement.

"This is about the group feeling of how do they, what are the topics they should be thinking about, you know what are they challenging themselves, what are they thinking about that will be important in six or nine months' time." Alan – LM

These acts appear to have been done knowing the impact they would have in creating a workable and positive team environment. As well as seeking to create a strong dynamic within the team, a number of the LMs used their discretion to make the team less reliant on them and able to be more 'self-managing' by determining what processes and procedures would make FLEs more empowered and self-managing.

"How do we, how do we make them, you know how are we understanding as a team where we are trying to get to, and what are the mechanisms and the processes that we put in place to make that happen." Paul – LM

This discretionary practice was found throughout the LMs in the study. Most took steps to define a group dynamic within their own team based on the context they were in and how this would support individual FLEs carrying out their discretionary activity in ways more likely to lead to individual performance outcomes being achieved. However four LMs extended the scope of this from their direct FLE team and considered the matrix team dynamic as well as their own team dynamic.

> *"You know, so it was about guiding my team, connecting with the right people and getting them to build the relationships, so they owned that eco-system of relationship with the customer, the partners, you know and other people within Ochre Inc." Alan – LM*

5.1.3 Designing Capability for Endeavour

This LM discretionary intervention is comprised of two different types of people management discretionary practice understood to have taken place and grouped thematically with the common aim of *designing capability for endeavour*. The first *defines team capability needed* emerged from the accounts of all LMs in the study and described them using their discretion to conduct some form of evaluation to understand, within their context, the skills, attitudes and abilities needed by their FLEs in order for them to carry out the discretionary activity that is likely to lead to them achieving their individual performance outcomes.

> *"Was it a function of their capabilities that they had? All those types of things, just looking at, er, a function of those things, and then trying to figure out how we motivate them and drive them forward." Paul – LM*

Therefore all LMs in the study reportedly used their discretion to define the skills, attitudes and abilities needed by their FLEs so they could carry out their discretionary activity in ways more likely to lead to them achieving their individual performance outcomes.

The second type of people management discretionary practice in the intervention *designing capability for endeavour*, was *incorporates considerations of FLE development*, meaning that eight of the 11 LMs in the study reported combining the previous discretionary practice of *defines team capability needed* with taking

responsibility for using their discretion to determine how gaps in skills, attitudes and abilities of FLEs would be addressed in order for their team members to carry out their discretionary activity in a way more likely to lead to them achieving their individual performance outcomes.

> *"HR is delivered to the workforce, I think, through the LMs. And I, and whether that's a conscious decision by Ochre Inc. or it's a subconscious decision, I don't really know. I think it is about understanding how to make an individual a success." Jeff – LM*

This discretionary practice was carried out in a range of ways, such as LMs using their discretion to identify, recommend and authorise FLE attendance at training courses accessible using the formal HRM systems. Most in the study used their discretion to add to the 'formal training' of FLEs, such as through the use of informal challenges, exercises, mentors, hiring new FLEs specifically to influence other team members, the creation of informal internal team responsibilities to provide FLEs with experience they would not otherwise achieve and the use of bespoke development systems often of their own design and delivered 'on the job'. Discretionary FLE development of this kind was reported by the majority of LMs in the study and appears to have been targeted deliberately at developing their FLEs to be able to adapt to the challenges of cross functional working and value creation selling.

> *"They had some of it, but they just needed that extra kind of push…..well why do you not go for that one meeting, have the meeting and spend the rest of the day there because you'll pick up more?" Michael – LM*

This suggests that the majority of LMs in the study took on people management responsibilities for developing their FLEs' abilities using their discretionary practices to increase the skills and abilities of their teams, supplementing the formal Ochre Inc. training and development programmes. Three of the 11 LMs of LMs applied their people management discretion to development needs of their FLEs that extended beyond developing their 'how to' gaps in skills, attitudes and abilities in order for their team members to carry out their discretionary activity in a way more likely to lead to them achieving their individual performance outcomes, meaning that in addition they

used their discretion to incorporate into their planning how they could develop their FLEs in ways that would help them achieve their career ambitions.

> *"So they, you know, the personal development of people, is, is part of it. So part of it is the housekeeping. Part of it is personal development." Terry – LM*

Therefore eight of the 11 LMs in the study reported combining the previous discretionary practice of *defines team capability needed* with taking responsibility for using their discretion to determine how gaps in skills, attitudes and abilities of FLEs would be addressed in order for their team members to carry out their discretionary activity in a way more likely to lead to them achieving their individual performance outcomes. While three within the study used their discretion to consider longer term FLE career considerations as well.

5.1.4 Summary of Produces Team Contextualisation

This section contains the details of *produces team contextualisation*, an example of LM people management discretion identified by the study. *Produces team contextualisation* is comprised of the groupings of discretionary practices *designing directed endeavour*, *designing social endeavour* and *designing endeavour capability*. These were used by LMs to take their appreciation of the context in tango function to adjust, shape and order the way they conceptualised and carried out their people management discretion during FY14. This illustrated conceptually in Figure 23.

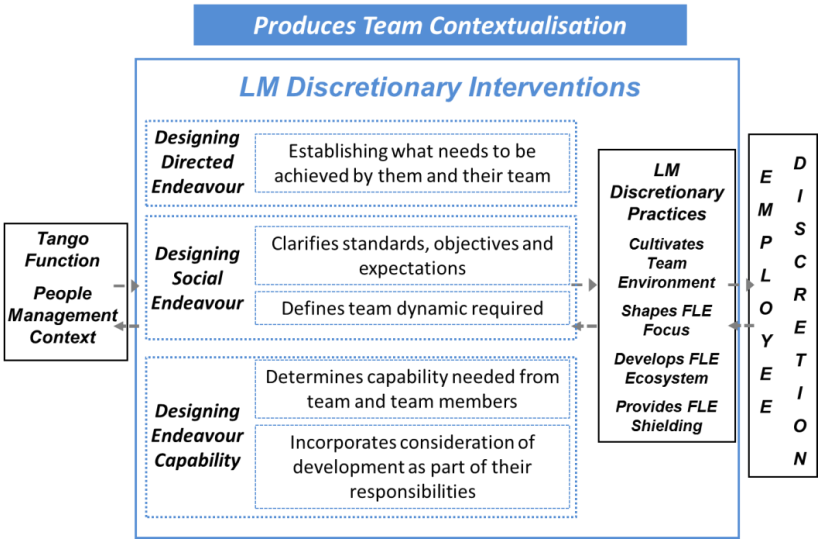

Figure 23 People Management Discretion – Produces Team Contextualisation

In the model above the contextual influences on the left through the LM discretionary intervention *produces team contextualisation* groupings of discretionary practices *designing directed endeavour*, *designing social endeavour* and *designing endeavour capability*, are understood to have influenced the way LMs carried out their people management discretion for the groupings of discretionary practices *cultivates team environment*, *shapes FLE focus*, *develops FLE ecosystem*, and *provides FLE shielding*, with a resultant effect on the discretionary activity on the LMs' FLEs.

5.2 Cultivates Team Environment

Cultivates team environment is a finding of the study and is an aspect of LM people management discretion. *Cultivates team environment* are groupings of discretionary practices understood to have been used by LMs to influence the environment of their direct FLEs in order to create social conditions which encouraged FLEs to use their discretionary activity in ways more likely to lead to their individual performance outcomes being achieved. LMs are understood to have carried out *cultivates team environment* through discretionary practices which have been grouped together thematically based on the understanding of what FLE level outcome they were intended to produce: *influencing the dynamic within the group*, *influencing the dynamic between the LM and individual FLEs* and *influencing the dynamic between the LM and the overall group*.

These discretionary practices were understood to influence the within group dynamic of the FLEs' direct reporting team, influencing the way they interacted with the group and their relationships with individual FLEs within the group, making use of social drivers between the LM and their team and also within the team between FLEs; all of which is understood to have resulted in relationships and social obligations which influenced how FLEs carried out their discretionary activity in ways that increased their likelihood of achieving their individual performance targets.

Each of these findings will now be explained in detail.

5.2.1 Influencing the Dynamic within the Group

Ten of the 11 LMs and 21 of 23 FLEs provided examples of LM group of discretionary practice which comprised *influencing the dynamic within the group*, which were understood to have been carried out by them to develop their FLE team environment.

> *"It's just creating the right environment." Keith – LM*

These were grouped together into three people management discretionary practices: *team building, creating a 'safe' space* and *encouraging team to problem solve*, all related to the common aim of *influencing the dynamic within the group*. The first discretionary practice, *team building* was something 10 of the 11 LMs and 21 of 23 FLEs reported LMs using their discretion to do. LMs are understood to have used discretionary practices intended to increase the likelihood of greater cohesion and collaboration between individuals within their team.

> *"How do we get the team together collaborating?" Paul – LM*

This included practices which are understood to generate 'healthy' internal competition between team members based on the view that FLEs thrive when in competitive environments.

> *"I'm quite … I like leader boards…I like all that because I think sales people I believe are competitive people." Michael – LM*

In this example, the LM created some internal competition to increase team cohesion and motivation, to influence how FLEs used their discretion in a way the LM seems to view would make them more effective. Most of the LMs made use of the regular meetings they held with their FLEs as vehicles for developing cohesion and collaboration, as well as information sharing. Some are understood to have used their discretion to include problem solving exercises to get team members working together and so strengthen relationships, while others, e.g. LM 'Terry', used his discretion to create responsibilities for team members for aspects of the meeting agenda. Another use of discretion by LM 'Keith' made sure that all information sharing happened before meetings, to maximise time on building social cohesion, strong relationships and better collaboration between team members. Some used team building events for this, such as

abseiling or go-karting. As well as developing cohesion and collaboration some LMs, such as 'Alan' are understood to have used their discretion to increase FLE ability alongside team building activities.

> *"It's all about thinking, thought provocation, it's not about you know account opportunity, we do that at other times…….you know this is about the group feeling of how do they, what are the topics they should be thinking about, you know what are they challenging themselves, what are they thinking about that will be important in six or nine months' time." Alan – LM*

While the discretionary practices reportedly used by LMs varied, the common intention among them appeared to be the shared intention of *influencing the dynamic within the group* by developing a stronger sense of cohesion and 'team spirit' between team members. This was echoed by the FLEs who, despite being involved in an increased number of matrix teams because of the effects of the cross functional agenda, both recognised and appreciated the efforts made by the LMs in the study to maintain a productive team dynamic within their own teams.

> *"You're not a team working on something together, far from it….but the interaction between you as a team, or as a group, is really important because you can learn from each other." Fiona – FLE*

The second type of people management discretionary practice reportedly used by LMs in the intervention *influencing the dynamic within the group* is *creating a 'safe' space*, meaning using their discretion to cultivate high levels of trust between individual team members. This is something that the approach taken by nine of the LMs suggests is done deliberately and which 12 FLEs reportedly felt was important.

> *"There's a lot of trust. That's important." Amir – FLE*

This is understood to have been of importance during FY14 as the FLEs in an LM's team did not work together on value creation deals, instead being part of an informal matrix team with others from different teams, often including other FLEs from outside tango function LMs. This appears important as, within the challenging cross functional working environment, FLEs felt a benefit from their fellow team members providing support as well as guidance. It appears that LMs recognised this and took steps to help

create these ‘safe’ spaces. This appeared to be challenging for LMs because of the many changes that took place within Ochre Inc. prior to and during FY14 in support of the cross functional agenda.

> *“[Immediately prior to FY14] I moved, er, different teams, so I was looking after named accounts, and then I moved into what you call the mid-tier team.” Fiona – LM*

A number of FLEs had experienced changes in LMs and found themselves in new or different teams, leaving the LM to use their discretion to develop cohesion in their own teams and any new team members they had acquired during the changes. To deal with these challenges LMs are understood to have used a number of discretionary practices. One discretionary practice involved deliberately reducing their own level of involvement when they thought it would increase the probability that those within the team would develop a higher level of trust between each other.

> *“I let people do their jobs. I don’t follow them around. I let them take control of their business and run their business. Let them solve things. You know. Together?” Jeff – LM*

Another discretionary practice understood to have been used was the proactive encouragement of the development of strong relationships between team members as carried out by the LMs ‘Michael’, ‘Alan’, ‘Paul’ and ‘Jeff’ through activities, events, styles of operations, pairings and deliberately seeking to create cohesion within their team. Other LMs such as ‘Aidan’ reportedly used their discretion to have a rule of ‘openness’ within their team as a ‘standard of operation’ to help develop relationships and trust between team members.

> *“I have very candid, open engagement with my people…..there’s formal aspects of management and….demanding complete honesty and transparency.” Aidan – LM*

This means that despite many of the reported challenges to the creation of a ‘safe space’ within the LMs’ teams, it is understood from LMs’ and their FLEs’ accounts that most of the LMs in the study were successful in using discretionary practices to influence

their FLEs to feel that their colleagues were trustworthy and that they could be relied upon to help them.

The third and final type of people management discretionary practice used by LMs in the intervention *influencing the dynamic within the group* was *encouraging team to problem solve*, which emerged from nine of the LMs as a discretionary practice which they reportedly used and from all 23 FLEs one which they valued greatly from their LM.

> *"Um, he's empowering. Terry is empowering. Um, but what I mean by, by that – so that's one word I'm gonna hold onto because he gives you the, the freedom to actually be creative and try and do your own thing." Alun – FLE*

This was understood to mean the LM using their discretion to make their team members feel empowered and encouraged to solve their problems by drawing on each other's experience or expertise, rather than that of the LM alone, thereby reportedly making more productive use of their own discretion and the capabilities within the team.

> *"They get too focused on one deal and we're [the fellow team members] all the time saying well, you need to see the bigger picture." Michael – LM*

One LM, 'Michael', reported doing this by using his discretion to create pairs within his team, specifically to problem solve, while others, 'Alan', 'Jeff' and 'Keith' reportedly used their discretion to have a session within their regular meetings for FLEs to work together and solve known problems others had. One LM, 'Terry', is understood to have used his discretion to create informal 'responsibilities' for FLEs within his team to act as problem solvers for other members, to develop the ability both of those supporting and those FLEs being supported. It was also done by some LMs to help FLEs develop greater confidence to look beyond the obvious, something that was felt to be an important ability of FLEs who are developing value creation deals. These practices increased the likelihood that team members would use each other for support to aid motivation or advice to aid FLE ability or access to opportunities, therefore helping FLEs' discretion in the pursuit of their individual performance targets.

While the use of these discretionary practices was reportedly commonplace throughout the LMs in the study, the use of discretionary people management practices to encourage problem solving was found mainly in those LMs of more successful teams.

5.2.2 Influencing the Dynamic between the LM and Individual FLEs

The grouping of discretionary practices defined as *influencing the dynamic between the LMs and individual FLEs* is comprised of three different types of people management discretionary practice: *maintaining individual motivation*, *being available for FLEs* and *relationships with FLEs*, all of which together comprise the intervention. Nine of the 11 LMs in the study and 18 of the 23 FLEs provided examples of the people management practices used by LMs to influence the dynamic between them and individual team members. The first *maintaining individual motivation* is understood to mean the LMs using their people management discretion to find out what motivates each individual member within their team and using this to channel how FLEs apply their own personal discretion and therefore put in the effort needed to achieve their individual FLE performance.

> *"You know, you just have to percolate it to the surface." Jeff – LM*

The ways to achieve this appear to have varied by LM and individual FLE, but the common theme is understood to be the LM using their discretion to seek an understanding of the things that motivate each individual FLE and from that understanding find ways to maintain that motivation.

> *"[I] work out what makes them tick and, er, what their end game is, what they're trying to achieve." Paul – LM*

The second of these people management discretionary practice used by LMs in the intervention 'influencing the dynamic between the LM and individuals within the team' is *being available for FLEs* – understood to mean the discretionary people management practices used by the LM to be accessible and available for their FLEs, were a need for their involvement to provide guidance, support or help required. This discretionary practice was viewed as important by 18 of the 23 FLEs in the study because they reportedly felt it showed the LM was providing understanding and empathy, as well as support.

"[My LM was] Helpful….understanding…. flexible….um…empathy, you know….empathy? To what we were trying to do." Jennifer – FLE

"I think he believed in me, and he just… encouragement and recognition." Fiona – FLE

"He guides you, he provides some, he does actually provide some valuable input." Sid – FLE

LMs are understood to have achieved this through many informal and formal conversations with their FLEs. This is thought to have let FLEs feel comfortable speaking about matters, no matter how apparently irrelevant or small. Not all LMs were reported as operating in this way, with some described by FLEs as being unavailable or unwilling to explore concerns or problems. 'James', 'Rita', 'Aidan' and 'Arthur' in particular had FLEs in the study who were critical of their lack of interest in being available, not listening to or not understanding their problems. This was something found mainly from FLEs of the below average LMs, though not exclusively.

The third and final type of people management discretionary practice reportedly used by nine LMs was the intervention *relationships with FLEs*. This is understood to have meant discretionary practices to develop, build and maintain a personal relationship between LMs and individual FLEs within their teams. Most LMs appear to have used their people management discretion to achieve this with, reportedly, most of their FLEs, in ways ranging from time spent with individuals to inquire about them and understand them both as people and FLEs.

"Paul's a good LM. I really like Paul." Jasper – FLE

However, it is understood not all LMs were successful in achieving a productive personal relationship with their FLEs. Three FLEs reported a very negative relationship with their LM: 'Conor' was unhappy with his LM 'Arthur' because 'Arthur' had made 'Conor' the subject of a formal performance improvement process (PIP), an HRM practice; 'Donald' was unhappy with his LM 'Rita' because of a clash of style and also because 'Rita' was reportedly not interested in or available for 'Donald' when he felt he needed help; 'Cary', was unhappy with his LM 'James' because he felt James had failed

to protect him from bullying from another senior manager. However, these were the minority and most LMs and FLEs in the study reported productive relationships.

5.2.3 Influencing the Dynamic between the LM and Overall Group

The intervention 'influencing the dynamic between the LM and the overall group' is understood to be comprised of two different types of people management discretionary practice: *building credibility* and *protecting from external pressure*. Seven of the 11 LMs and 14 of the 23 FLEs described LMs using their discretionary practices in ways that were categorised as the intervention 'influencing the dynamic between the LM and the overall group'. This intervention was kept separate from the similar 'influencing the dynamic between the LM and individual FLEs' as, from the data, a subtle difference was understood to have existed between the relationship between LM and the group rather than the individuals within it. This will now be explained.

The first category of LM discretionary practices identified were those reportedly used to influence the team through the LM *building credibility*, with the 'credibility' being that from the perspective of the members of the LM's team. Many of the LMs in the study were understood to be liked and trusted as individuals by their team members. However, it was appreciated from the accounts of those in the study that 'credibility' was something that was in addition to liking the LM. The 'credibility' an LM was understood to hold from the perspective of their FLEs appeared to be related to how much experience and knowledge the LM held.

> *"Jeff has got a great, vast amount of experience." Jenny – FLE*

This appeared to provide them with respect not only for the experience and knowledge, but because it seems it made LMs 'believable' in appearing to understand what it takes to succeed in difficult circumstances, such as were experienced by those in the study during FY14.

> *"Because he's [Jim] been through it himself." Stephen – FLE*

It is possible that because of the changes that had taken place in Ochre Inc., and tango function due to the cross functional agenda and the shift to value creation selling, that this created a need from FLEs for an LM who could be perceived by them as someone

who was able to provide understanding and guidance for FLEs because of these changes. As well as experience, the LMs also used their people management discretionary practices to exert their authority.

> *"We get everyone back on track in terms of where they need to be." Paul – LM*

In particular this was understood to have done by LMs to make sure that FLEs were sufficiently organised to be able to achieve their individual performance targets. This organisation was reportedly done not just by using authority but by providing some form of rationale.

> *"I walk them through this is why I need it and if they still do not get it then I'm going to say well, I have to do this because I won't ask anybody to do something if they do not need to do it." Michael – LM*

These things combined suggest that this discretionary 'people management practice' was used by LMs to create a position as a 'figurehead' for the team and possibly as much of symbolic importance as operational, which is why it has been kept separate from the interpersonal relationships mentioned above describing LMs' use of their people management discretion to *influence the dynamic between the LM and individual FLEs*. It was found in the study that LMs were using their discretion to achieve this and *building credibility*. However, some LMs were understood to be more 'arbitrary' or 'authoritarian' in how they used their discretion to exert their authority.

> *"And so I asked for activity reports every week. Now that activity report had to come hell or high water on a Monday. Even though I did not actually look at them. That was not the point." Rita – LM*

The second people management discretionary practice used by LMs in the discretionary practice *influencing the dynamic between the LM and the overall group* is *protecting from external pressure*.

> *"Um, er he is a filter so a good LM should not um … Basically really bad managers pass down David's [Oswald, Head of 'T'] kickings, so basically at the top they all … it's really aggressive, you know, they, they shout, they scream at*

each other and…… a good manager should be a filter and a blocker to allow you to do your job." Jasper – FLE

The evidence also suggests that when LMs use their people management discretion to act as a 'barrier to external pressure', FLEs then use them as a mentor or guide on how they, as an FLE, should direct their own discretion.

"You know, he actually knows how to sell, and he gives me valuable input." Sid – FLE

LMs who described using their people management discretion in this way were understood to be more likely managing an above average team as eight of the nine FLEs in the study who described their LM as using their people management discretion for *protecting from external pressure* also achieved their personal target in FY14. This suggests that this discretionary practice, which was understood to involve the LM filtering out negativity acting to diffuse the importance or significance for the team of external pressures, may have been an influence on the way FLEs used their own discretion to achieve their individual performance outcomes.

"With Jim [LM] I can explain to him what I'm doing, he'll challenge on it, once he's comfortable with it he'll back you…. Because…..I wouldn't say I lack confidence, but sometimes if I'm trying something new it wouldn't take a lot to push me back." Stephen – FLE

This may be because by using their discretion to appear to their FLEs that they were acting as *protecting from external pressure*, the LM provided their FLEs with greater confidence because they were being 'looked after' and, despite the challenges within the Ochre Inc. environment, they could have more confidence to use their own discretion to build complex value creation deals.

5.2.4 Cultivates Team Environment and Other FLE Outcomes

Some of the discretionary practices used by LMs within the study appear to have contributed to other FLE discretionary outcomes not related to the individual performance they achieved but relevant within a people management context. An FLE 'Cary' reported that he felt he needed access to 'James' during FY14 as he needed

'James' to intervene and protect him from bullying from a senior manager, 'Norman Trench'. However, during FY14 'James' reported that he was time pressured as he was covering both his LM position and a previous position, limiting, by his own admission, the time he could spend with his team.

> *"There was enormous amounts of time pressure…I would, you know, I guess cut to the chase quicker than perhaps previously…..the level of self-sufficiency of individual contributors was not as high as I though…I think that the, erm, amount of input I needed to put in was possibly higher than my expectation." James – LM*

This lack of availability and support was attributed by 'Cary' as leading to his mental health issues because of the stress caused by the bullying which made him choose to leave Ochre Inc. prior to the end of FY14. 'Cary' was reportedly a 'high performer', who exceeded his performance target in FY14 and 'James' was among the above average LMs in the study for individual FLE performance outcomes and was managing the 5th most successful team out of 25 in FY14 by this measure. Whether the reasons that 'Cary' never received the support he claims he needed, or whether this is what led to his mental health problems and subsequent choice to leave Ochre Inc., cannot be known with confidence from this study, nor can it be known whether these events unfolded as described from the available data, and even if these events were verified, it would still not be possible from this study to claim causal connection between them and the mental health consequences for 'Cary'.

However, if this is true it suggests that tango function was a high pressure and challenging environment during FY14. It may also suggest that 'Cary's' experience placed individual performance as the most important measure and consequently other important matters may have been overlooked.

5.2.5 Summary of Cultivates Team Environment

This section contained the details *cultivates team environment*, an example of LM people management discretion identified by the study. LMs are understood to have carried out *cultivates team environment* through discretionary practices, which have been grouped together thematically based on the understanding of what FLE level

outcome they were intended to produce. *Cultivates team environment* is the grouping of discretionary practices reportedly used by LMs to influence the environment of their direct FLEs in order to create social conditions which encouraged FLEs to use their discretionary activity in ways likely to lead to individual performance outcomes being achieved. In Figure 24 the LM discretionary intervention *cultivates team environment* is comprised of discretionary practices which are grouped as *influencing the dynamic within the group, influencing the dynamic between the LM and individual FLEs* and *influencing the dynamic between the LM and the overall group*, which LMs are understood to have used to influence individual FLE discretionary activity during FY14.

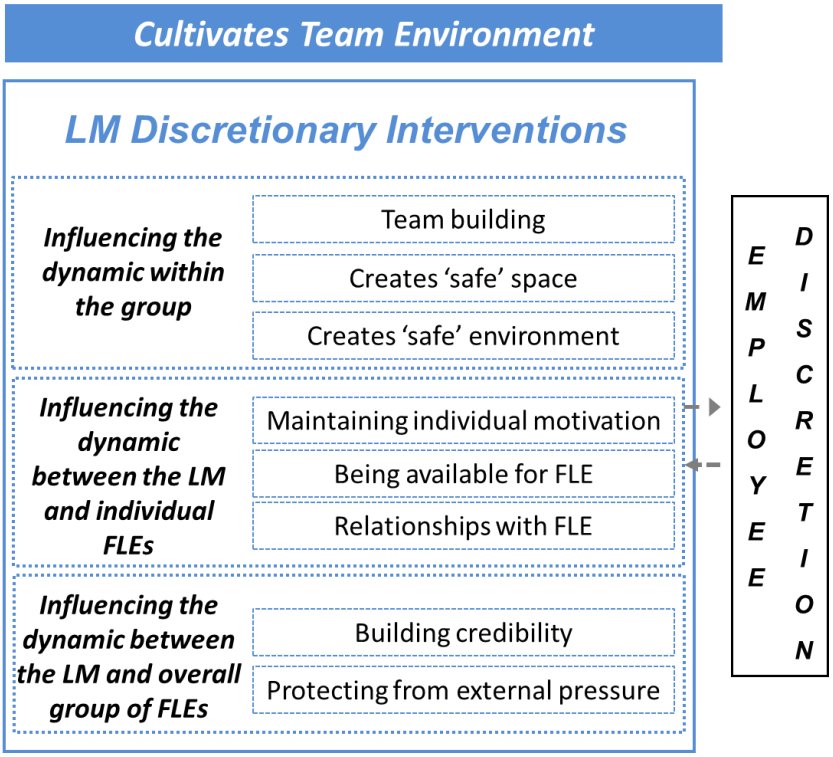

Figure 24 People Management Discretion – Cultivates Team Environment

5.3 Shapes FLE Focus

Shapes FLE focus is a finding of the study and is an aspect of LM people management discretion. *Shapes FLE focus* is the grouping of discretionary practices which were used by LMs to influence how their FLEs used their discretion to select and achieve viable value creation deal opportunities. This was called *shapes FLE focus* to reflect the intention of having FLEs use their discretion to select and then conduct the activity most likely to lead them to achieving their objectives and individual targets in the

context of cross functional and value creation selling that was still relatively new during the period the study was examining.

The changes in tango function and Ochre Inc., more widely caused by the cross functional agenda and value creation selling, are understood to have meant that LMs had to find new ways to help their FLEs determine priorities, manage their activity and interact with their customers. Before examining LM discretionary practices, it will be helpful to share the findings on the changes to FLE discretionary activity, to provide more meaning to the people management discretion that was identified.

5.3.1 FLE Discretionary Activities

FLE discretionary activities were found to have two categories: those involved in generating a viable deal, called here *generating opportunities* and those involved in bringing this to completion in the form of a contract/agreement, called here *closing the deal* ('closing' meaning 'agreeing'). The FLE discretionary activities found and understood to be involved in g*enerating opportunities* were: *proactively mapping, developing and managing strong customer relationships*; *matching the 'deal' to the customer business needs or problems using multiple products and creative thinking*; *prioritising accounts with potential or identifying opportunities others have missed*; *overcoming negative customer perceptions of Ochre Inc. caused by previous poor behaviour of first-line FLEs or the service delivered failing to match expectations*; *working together cross functional in a matrix team*; *discussing long-term contracts*; *taking a long-term approach with customers*; *only selling your own product and not working in an cross functional team*. These reported activities were compared to the actual performance outcomes achieved by the FLEs in the study, which then suggested FLEs who achieved their individual performance targets were more likely to have used their discretion carrying out certain discretionary activities over others.

Three of the identified discretionary activities, *proactively mapping, developing and managing strong customer relationships, match deal to their business needs or problem using multiple products* and *creative thinking and overcome negative customer perceptions of Ochre Inc.* were found across all 23 in the study.

However, the way individual FLEs reportedly carried out these discretionary practices varied within the study. Those FLEs who described using more of their discretionary time and effort on these activities were more likely to have achieved their individual FLE performance target than those who did not. This suggests that similar practices can be carried out in different ways by FLEs using their discretion and through this difference may contribute to explaining different individual performance outcomes found.

Four of the identified discretionary activities, *working together cross functional in a matrix team, prioritising accounts with potential, looking for opportunities others have missed, long term contract related discussions* and *taking a long term approach with customers* were mainly understood to be carried out by those who achieved their individual performance outcomes. By contrast the discretionary practices, *selling based on a solution built around your own product* and *failing to build 'matrix' teams*, involving senior stakeholders or work cross functional were mainly understood to have been carried out by those who failed to achieve their individual performance target. This suggests that FLEs not only carried out similar discretionary activities differently during FY14, but some carried out different discretionary activities.

> *"Now? Most of the time now when we do big deals it's always cross line of business." Fiona – FLE*

As some of these were associated with better or poorer individual FLE performance outcomes, this may also contribute to explaining the different individual FLE performance outcomes found.

Therefore the discretionary activities understood to have been undertaken in *generating opportunities* in FY14 appear to have some appreciable differences between FLEs, which may contribute to explaining the different individual performance outcomes found. From these differences it is suggested that the more successful FLEs carried out discretionary activities which related to working together as a matrix team, prioritising account opportunities, seeking longer term contract opportunities and working to a longer term view on the delivery of value creation deals from customers.

The activities understood to be involved in *closing the deal* were: *compliance used to pressure customers/being transactional when needed*; *using senior Ochre Inc. stakeholders to influence customer decisions*; and *closing or trying to close a sale early because of internal pressure and in the process destroying value*. These reported activities were also compared to the actual performance outcomes achieved by the FLEs in the study and suggested differences in FLE discretionary activity that were related to individual performance target outcomes achieved. The first two reported discretionary activities, 'compliance used to pressure customers/being transactional when needed' and 'using senior Ochre Inc. stakeholders to influence customer decisions' were found mainly among the FLEs who achieved their individual target in FY14. 'Compliance used to pressure customers/being transactional when needed', suggested a willingness by more successful FLEs to 'win ugly', a term used by those in the study when contractual obligations, 'compliance', are used to pressurise or force a customer to agree a 'deal' by using previous overuse of an earlier service or some other legal obligation they have to Ochre Inc. This is understood to place great pressure on the customer to complete the sale, or do so in a timeframe that benefits Ochre Inc., rather than the customer. This approach was rationalised as necessary by the more successful FLEs and found to be encouraged by LMs, though none in the study demonstrated any pleasure in these tactics.

> *"It's probably the year that typifies a win ugly…you know, we won but we knew we should not have won, but we did. But the cards we played, you know, if we were to… There's nothing worse than being a dead purist……and I think that's, that's err, that's I learnt." Cary – FLE*

The second discretionary activity found to be more common among FLEs who achieved their individual performance target was the use of their LM or, with the support of their LM, another senior Ochre Inc. stakeholder, to work alongside them when finalising or 'closing' a 'deal' as an 'executive sponsor'. The 'executive sponsor' was typically used to influence customers directly, provide credibility or in some cases be the one to apply pressure to make the customer commit to a 'deal'.

> *"But it was also the timescales, they wanted to bring the, they wanted to buy in August and we wanted them to buy it in May." Jennifer – FLE*

Both these identified discretionary activities were understood to have been conducted in close consultation with the LM and with an LM reportedly able to use their discretionary practices to manage events to allow the FLE to conclude 'deals' in this way. By contrast, the FLEs who were less successful in achieving their individual performance targets were found to be less likely to have a close working relationship with their LM, or an LM less successful in using their discretionary practice to manage events, so consequently found themselves forced to 'close deals'.

> *"So I would say due to management pressure for results, erm, I was asked to do unnatural things that I would not normally do to a customer, in other words, trying to force the issue which I think is… I understand why the company wants… needs results but, you know, you cannot really force a giant into national banks to do something he does not want to do, have to be very clever to do that." Conor – FLE*

This is understood to have removed from the FLE the opportunity for success as they were then reportedly unable to develop a larger deal other than the one they were forced to accept. This pressure is understood to have rarely come solely from their LM but typically from someone outside their team, usually the senior manager to whom their LM reported.

Therefore there were differences found in how FLEs who were more successful 'closed the deal', which may help explain different individual FLE performance outcomes achieved in FY14. Firstly they may have been more willing to pressure customers or use short-term approaches to help take them to a more rewarding outcome, which typically was reported to have involved another senior stakeholder or their LM to help them. Secondly they and their LM may have worked together to reduce external pressure to close deals early and limit FLE opportunities.

These two examples of identified discretionary activities, *generating opportunities* and *closing the deal*, provide examples of the type of FLE discretionary activity used by FLEs in the study, and help illustrate how the reported changes took place prior to and during FY14 within Ochre Inc. Having to work in a cross functional manner and pursue value creation deals meant learning new approaches within a pressured environment. The groupings of discretionary practices which will now be explained show how, in this

context, LMs used their people management discretion to influence individual FLEs and their discretionary activity in order to help them achieve their individual performance targets during FY14. LMs are understood to have carried out their discretionary practices, which have been grouped together thematically based on how they are understood to have influenced FLE level outcomes and are presented here as *prioritisation management* and *focusing FLE activity management*. These discretionary practices were understood to influence the ways FLEs developed and completed their own discretionary value creation deal activity. This is understood to have led to FLEs using their discretionary activity in pursuit of their individual performance targets in ways that were more likely to result in successfully achieving their individual performance targets.

Each of these findings will now be explained in detail.

5.3.2 Prioritisation Management

The discretionary practice *prioritisation management* is understood to be comprised of two different types of people management discretionary practice: *setting priorities* and *encouraging long-term thinking*. These were developed from the accounts of ten of the 11 LMs and 15 of the 23 FLEs and informed by the identified FLE discretionary activities, *generating opportunities* and *closing the deal* summarised respectively in Tables 12 and 13. These helped in providing an understanding of how LM discretionary practices were understood to influence FLE discretion through the effect they are understood to have had on the FLE discretionary activities described in *generate opportunities* and *closing the deal*.

Table 12 FLE Discretionary Activity for Generating Opportunities and Actual Individual Performance Outcomes in FY14

FLE Discretionary Activity for 'Generating Opportunities'	**How Associated with Actual Individual Performance Achieved**
Proactively mapping, developing and managing strong customer relationships	Common across all interviewees, regardless of achievement of individual target in FY14
Match deal to their business needs or problem using multiple products and creative thinking	
Overcome negative customer perceptions of Ochre Inc.	
Working together in a cross functional matrix team	Mainly found among those who achieved their individual target in FY14
Prioritising accounts with potential or looking for opportunities others have missed	
Long-term contract related discussions	
Taking a long-term approach with customers	
Selling based on a solution built around your own product	Mainly found among those who failed to achieve their individual target in FY14
Failing to build matrix teams, involve senior stakeholders or work in a cross functional way	

Table 13 FLE Discretionary Activity for Closing the Deal and Actual Individual Performance Outcomes in FY14

FLE Discretionary Activity for 'Closing the Deal'	**Association with Actual Individual Performance Achieved**
Compliance used to pressure customers/being transactional when needed	Mainly found among those who achieved their individual target in FY14
Using senior Ochre Inc. managers to influence customer decisions	
Closing or trying to close a sale early because of internal pressure and in the process destroying value	Mainly found among those who failed to achieve their individual target in FY14

The first discretionary practice *setting priorities* was understood to involve LMs using their discretion to help FLEs identify which value creation deals were achievable, how much they would be worth towards the FLE's target and within what conceivable timescale they could expect to be completed. In short supporting the FLE discretionary activity involved in *generating opportunities*.

"You've got to really quickly work out, you know, what's achievable in the time remaining. You know, do not place bets that you cannot, you know, pull off, so you've got to focus really hard on the clients that you have, you know, and separate the clients off who can deliver." Jeff – LM

LMs are then understood to have encouraged FLEs to determine what steps would be needed to make a successful value creation deal happen, which is then understood to have help the FLEs determine how best to use their own discretion in the most effective way to achieve this.

"We would need to look at there's a big number to achieve in this fiscal year, so what are the things that we need to put in place to ensure that when we get to Q3 and Q4 we, we have opportunity to close deals. Rather than be scratching around looking for, you know deals that are never going to close quite frankly." Paul – LM

LMs were reportedly concerned that without this help their FLEs would be prone to pursuing opportunities with less likelihood of succeeding, something that was supported by the finding that FLEs who used their discretion when 'prioritising accounts with potential' were more likely to have achieved their personal target in FY14.

"So you look at your deals and you say well okay, we've got five we can do, you know, they can really happen. Erm, and, and, I mean the first thing you try and do with them, apart from ensuring they can happen and accelerating them, is to grow them and make them bigger in other words." Jim – LM

This was understood to be a particular challenge for LMs and FLEs during FY14 because of the cross functional working and value creation selling changes.

"So every year everyone's target increases by about 20% and then you get fewer accounts to do it with." Jasper – FLE

The cross functional agenda is also understood to have given FLEs fewer customers to sell to, meaning that they had to sell a lower volume of larger transactions. Operationally, this meant that FLEs were adjusting to this change while changing to value creation selling. Value creation meant that as well as speaking to different buyers

than they had in the past, they also had to talk to them about different things, such as business matters, rather than just the technology focused conversations they had relied upon previously.

> *"People have done very well selling in their niches, and I think that that time has gone." Stephen – FLE*

As well as discussing less technological matters, they had to link the technological benefit to the organisation's challenges, e.g. removing a deficit in the quality of the organisation's customer service, rather than providing just the latest technology. This was used to justify the additional expense and was the essence of the value creation approach, rather than a 'value capture' approach. However, value creation selling in an cross functional setting created a greater risk of being very successful or very unsuccessful.

> *"You're either gonna finish on 50% [of your target] or you're gonna finish on 150% [of your target]. There is no middle ground." Stewart – FLE*

These things are understood to have meant FLEs needed their LM's help to plan how they would achieve the larger targets they were now working towards in this new paradigm. Therefore the discretionary practice of *setting priorities* is understood to have been of significance for the way FLEs used their discretion during FY14 and the individual outcomes they produced.

The second discretionary practice identified, *encouraging long-term thinking*, developed from the accounts of eight of the 11 LMs and 15 of the 23 FLEs in the study, was also important in the new paradigm of value creation selling, where 'deals' could take much longer than in previous years. This is reportedly because of the longer sales cycle that it takes to sell cross functional deals, compared to smaller deals, which can take longer than 12 months to complete, sometimes even two years.

> *"And that started two years ago right. Because it takes time to build those relationships." Alan – LM*

It was reported that this could create tensions for FLEs who under the incentive system in Ochre Inc. needed to achieve their target within a year. This is understood to have

resulted in a large degree of pressure to either meet or exceed forecasted expectations, which was influenced by how the organisation was performing elsewhere.

> *"It gets that crazy." Donald – FLE*

To manage this, LMs reportedly used discretionary practices to influence their FLEs and the way they used their discretion, so that the FLEs worked towards the longer term outcomes, despite the short-term pressures within Ochre Inc. Eight of the LMs indicated that this was problematic for them and required their discretionary practice to influence FLE discretion, so the FLEs worked in a longer term manner more in keeping with value creation selling.

> *"Because what we're selling now, or what, sorry, yeah the revenues we're doing now, this quarter, are things we did nine months ago." Alan – LM*

Therefore it is understood that LMs used their discretion to encourage FLEs to plan further ahead in the ways they structured value creation deals and ignore the Ochre Inc. quarterly time frame.

> *"So while we had a great relationship, actually the deal that we did was, er, from our, my business, was because of the sort of, a two and a half year programme." Alan – LM*

LMs are also understood to have deliberately intervened in the formal value creation deal review process by helping FLEs adequately prepare so the FLEs could use their discretion to conduct themselves in ways which allowed them to reduce the pressure placed upon them to be less long-term. It is understood this also involved reassurance and willingness to support the FLE.

> *"It's to help you and just like if there's things that, it's to...especially……not to kind of hit you with a stick and go, you know, run faster and do these deals quicker, I do not see it that way at all. Their role is really to support you in terms of the…infrastructure, and if you need something done they need to do it for you." Fiona – FLE*

It was understood that it could also involve LMs becoming proactively involved in support of the FLE.

"I think actually that's credit to James as a manager in that he can sort of look beyond the number." Anoush – FLE

Some LMs were criticised by FLEs in the study for not 'encouraging longer term' thinking or being supportive, such as the LM 'Rita'.

"The perception I get, is that….aren't necessarily that bothered about me as an individual…about me as an individual not bringing in the money." Donald – FLE

'Rita's' FLE in the study, 'Donald', described her failing to help him manage timeframes when he tried to explain why he was struggling to 'close' larger value creation deals within a short timeframe.

FLEs are understood to have needed LMs to help them balance longer term thinking with shorter term pragmatism. This is understood to have meant FLEs being encouraged to use their discretion, recognising when tactics to pressurise a customer might be required to bring a value creation deal to a conclusion. It was found in the study that while value creation deals are understood to have hinged on the creation of a compelling business solution to a customer's organisational problem, the practical reality meant customers could occasionally be reluctant to commit to large transactions.

When this happened it is understood that some of the LMs worked closely with their FLEs to coerce the customer into making a commitment to the 'deal'. These were reportedly perceived by many as unpleasant and detracted from the intention of solving the customer's problems, and were described as being more akin to corporate bullying.

"So I think you know that Ochre does sort of two types….we call them dirty deals, which is contractual...and Value Selling." Alan – LM

The most frequent method reportedly used to exert pressure on a customer to commit to a value creation deal came from a customer's previous historic overspend of Ochre Inc. products and services. This is understood to have created a legal contractual obligation for the customer to pay for this usage. Called 'compliance', this approach was reportedly very common as Ochre Inc. are understood to have deliberately sold a customer a licence based on a defined number of users, but with full knowledge that it

underestimated how many users would actually be required by the customer. In addition to this reportedly deliberate undercounting of customer users, the costs of software upgrades, which are understood to be highly frequent because of the rapid pace of technology change, were reported to have been omitted from contracts as well. Then, when customers added additional users or upgraded their software, two things that it was reported Ochre Inc. deliberately made it easy for customers to do, rather than inform them, Ochre Inc. kept a record of the 'overspend'. It is understood that when the customer was reluctant to commit to a value creation deal' this overspend was used to pressurise the customer.

This shortfall, it is understood, could extend into millions of dollars and has left customers reportedly frustrated and angry, but legally obliged to meet the cost. Ochre Inc. is then understood to have used this obligation to offer the customer a 'settlement', which would 'offset' the cost of a value creation deal.

> *"And, er, that's great but it's not really selling, er, it's not value selling." Alan – LM*

'Compliance' involved a level of coercion which was described by LMs and in the study pejoratively as 'gun in mouth deals', such was the level of the coercive nature of these deals, the pressure they exerted on customers and the ill feeling they are reported to have created.

> *"The very worst ones are whereby – somebody coined this phrase last year – a 'gun in mouth' deal whereby, you know, [its] questionable along the terms of compliance." James – LM*

However, many LMs were understood to be pragmatic, recognising that it was an important, if unpleasant, way of making sure customers committed to deals.

> *"Ochre does probably half of its number by doing those sort of dirty deals, which nobody really talks about, right?" Alan – LM*

The majority of LMs, eight out of 11, were understood to be reluctantly supportive of this approach if it was required, and some admitted to using this technique during FY14 to help get some deals 'across the line'.

"Erm, there was certainly a couple that stick in the mind that were gun in mouth deals, yeah." James – LM

Therefore it is understood that LMs used their discretion to help their FLEs rationalise this approach and encourage them to use 'compliance' if necessary. Only a small number of the value creation deals reported in the study (three) were reported to have relied on this method to secure customer commitment and all came from the above average LMs in the study.

These things combined are taken as illustrating the discretionary practice *prioritisation management*. This involved LMs using discretionary practices to help FLEs use their discretion to identify and develop an approach to pursue viable value creation deals, determine what is involved to make them conclude and how long this might take, while managing the internal procedures in Ochre Inc. This also included LMs using discretionary practices to help their FLEs use their discretion to find ways to 'win ugly' if that was necessary to overcome customers' reluctant to complete a value creation deal.

There were also suggestions that while influencing FLE discretion, the discretionary practices of LMs were also influencing the abilities FLEs had for working in this new paradigm. They were also understood to be helping FLEs use their own discretion to identify and pursue 'deals' understood from the study to be more likely to provide an opportunity for the FLEs to succeed in achieving their individual performance targets.

5.3.3 Focusing FLE Activity Management

The discretionary practice *focusing FLE activity management* is comprised of two different types of identified people management discretionary practice: 'helping FLE time management' and 'monitoring FLE activity' which was developed from ten of the 11 LMs and 17 of the 23 FLEs. The first discretionary practice 'helping FLE time management' was something the majority of LMs in the study reportedly used their people management discretion to do. This discretionary practice is understood to have involved LMs helping FLEs use their discretion to prioritise and remain focused on the value creation deals which were viewed by LMs as the most viable, intervening to alter FLE discretionary activity when LMs felt FLEs their needed help.

"You know, sales reps will just go after … you know, they get too focused on one deal and we're all the time saying well, you need to see the bigger picture." Michael – LM

The LMs are understood to have tried to do this in an unobtrusive way, reportedly allowing the FLEs as much use of their own discretion as possible.

"I'm not going to sit there and tell you how you're going to manage your time. I want you to tell me what the best way is." Michael – LM

Some were understood to encourage the more experienced team members to do this activity with each other.

"My approach is ……not always to report to me...sort of work it out together." Alan – LM

However, it is understood that, in recognising the way FLEs needed to use their discretionary use of time differed from in the past, nine of the 11 LMs included discretionary practices to coach or guide FLEs on how they could best use their time when carrying out value creation selling. This ranged from helping FLEs understand the customer's business environment more efficiently, which stakeholders they ought to speak to, what types of opportunities they could buy on a larger sale and how FLEs could convince to purchase more products.

"In terms of the actual, sort of, size of deals, trying to think outside the box and be creative as to what else we could … Wh-wh-what else I could put in front of the customer which would be of benefit to them but would also be a win-win, in that my deal size would grow. Erm, introduce the customer to executive sponsors internally at Ochre Inc. as well." Fiona – FLE

This reportedly sometimes involved the LM being involved physically alongside the FLE to speak to customers and support the FLE, often combined with coaching conversations after these customer conversations. This was understood as not reporting on how the FLE conducted the conversation, but on how appropriate the meeting was in terms of achieving their sales objective.

"And you will learn more by sitting in their offices just listening in to conversations and being seen." Michael – LM

This approach was echoed by FLEs, with 16 describing this type of involvement from their LMs and that LMs adapted their discretionary practices to support the time management of their FLEs within the new paradigm of value creation selling and improve the likelihood that FLEs achieved their individual performance outcomes.

"Um, and then I set myself an objective for this fiscal [FY14] which was to go about trying to, um, coach some of the people in a particular direction." Jim – LM

The second discretionary practice identified as 'activity management' was 'monitoring FLE activity' which was understood to be the discretionary practices used by LMs to help their FLEs to manage the reportedly intrusive and distracting reporting procedures that are understood to have operated within Ochre Inc. during FY14. Because Ochre Inc. is a quarterly driven, US listed public company, it is understood that there is a need for regular, often weekly, information gathering for stock market governance and shareholder expectations to be met.

The consequence of this was understood to be constant information gathering by LMs which occupied a lot of time and in turn influenced how the LMs were able to interact with their FLEs. Seven of the 11 LMs and 16 of the 23 FLEs provided examples of the discretionary practices that were understood to have been used by LMs in 'monitoring FLE activity management' to help their FLEs navigate these procedures, yet retain enough freedom to use their own discretion as productively as possible when they were seeking to 'generate opportunities' or involved in *closing the deal*.

"Governance of managing a forecast, um, submitting a forecast, um, managing a team to the forecasts, um, attending forecast calls……you can spend an awful lot of time doing that…time you could be…well….proper conversations." Paul – LM

The frequent reporting that involved ongoing evaluation of the value of impending value creation deals was referred to by LMs as 'weighing the pig'. These were viewed

as time wasted that could be used instead on bringing the deal to fruition by LMs and FLEs in the study.

> *"In Ochre Inc. [an LM] spends his entire life weighing the pig, right. So there's nobody trying to get the pig any fatter. We're just all trying to weigh the damn thing, right. And we're all looking at, at the number. Rather than figure out, how do we massage it up and down? Huge amount. Huge amount." Jim – LM*

The consequence of this was understood to be that some FLEs found themselves deviating from agreed discretionary activity being undertaken to develop value creation deals. This was explained as including being forced to pressurise customers to 'close' a deal early when the end of quarters drew near because senior managers were demanding immediate results to appease shareholders or their own internal Ochre Inc. stakeholders.

> *"You're told to go into an account and ask them to close the deal when, you know, you've told them that we really should not be doing that. But sometimes that's, that's sales, you know. It's a quarterly driven business." Jasper – FLE*

This reportedly did not just alter agreed FLE plans but is claimed to have resulted in smaller deals than might otherwise have been achieved without this interference.

> *"Well the thing is we, we're so quarterly driven it does not mean, matter if you've done your number because it's very much, it's all about that quarter." Fiona – FLE*

The consequence of this was an ongoing requirement for information gathering by LMs which was in some ways carried out in addition to the information they personally needed in order to manage their FLEs' discretionary activity.

> *"It gets that crazy." Donald – LM*

It was found in the study that not all LMs were successful in using their discretionary practice to allow their FLEs to be able to use their discretionary activity to pursue value creation deals free from interference by Ochre Inc. quarterly driven pressures or senior manager interference.

"And then I have a reporting line to my LM, a dotted line to each of the k- key account managers, or the regional managers, a dotted line to the VP of financial services. And they're all wanting the same information for forecasting and numbers, but in a different way, and it just becomes a nightmare." Donald – FLE

As a result, ten of the LMs reported that they found it hampered their discretionary practice at some point during FY14 from influencing their FLEs' discretion in some way.

"Governance of managing a forecast, um, submitting a forecast, um, managing a team to the forecasts, um, attending forecast calls……you can spend an awful lot of time doing that…time you could be…well….proper conversations." Paul – LM

The discretionary practice *focusing FLE activity management* therefore helped FLEs use their discretion when *generating opportunities* and *closing the deal* by helping them use their time in ways that are understood to have increased achieving a successful value creation deal, while navigating the reportedly intrusive reporting procedures within Ochre Inc. during FY14. Therefore the LM discretionary practices in monitoring team activity are understood to have been carried out to help FLEs have the freedom to use their discretion to carry out the activity plans agreed with their LMs, despite the distractions to this from senior managers or the quarterly reporting system.

5.3.4 Summary of Shapes FLE Focus

This section contained the details of *shapes FLE focus*, an example of LM people management discretion identified by the study. LMs are understood to have carried out *shapes FLE focus* through discretionary practices, which have been grouped together thematically based on the understanding of what FLE level outcome they were intended to produce. *Shapes FLE focus* is the grouping of discretionary practices understood to have been used by LMs to influence the way FLEs used their discretion activity to *generate opportunities* and then *closing the deal* within the Ochre Inc. cross functional context. These are understood to have encouraged FLEs to use their discretionary

activity in ways likely to lead to individual performance outcomes being achieved. This is illustrated conceptually in Figure 24.

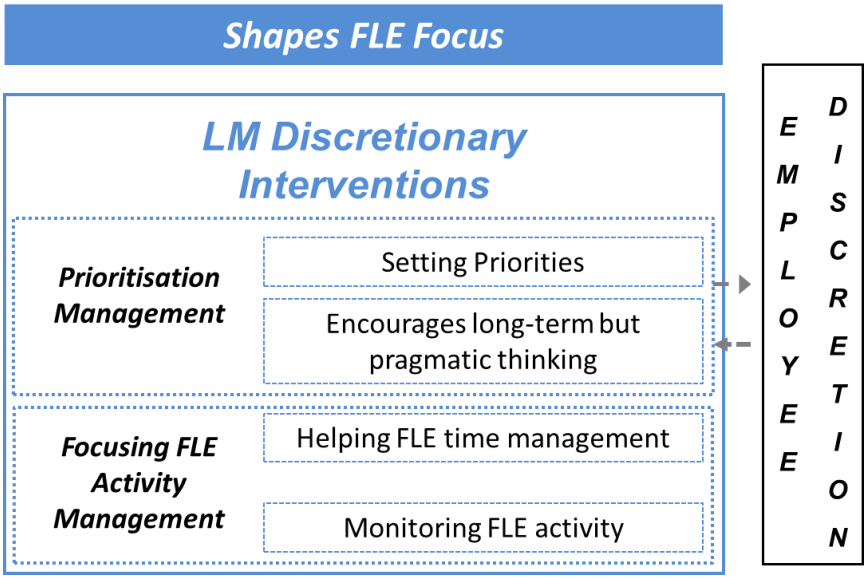

Figure 25 People Management Discretion – Shapes FLE Focus

In the model above, the LM grouping of discretionary practices *shapes team focus* is comprised of discretionary practices grouped as *prioritisation management and focusing FLE activity management* and which LMs are understood to have used to influence individual FLE discretionary activity during FY14.

5.4 Develops FLE Ecosystem

Develop FLE ecosystem is the grouping of discretionary practices reportedly used by LMs to influence the way their FLEs used their discretionary activity to develop work in cross functional working conditions and a matrix team that FLEs were typically a part of during the time of the study and which represented a change from the way that FLEs worked before.

The changes understood to have been made reportedly forced FLEs to adopt cross functional working and operate in a matrix team to create what is described by those in the study as a more complex team structure for FLEs and LMs to deal with. This reportedly altered approach is understood to have meant that as well as being part of their own teams sharing a single LM, FLEs were also required to form informal matrix

teams with other FLEs who each had different LMs. This change is illustrated in Figure 25.

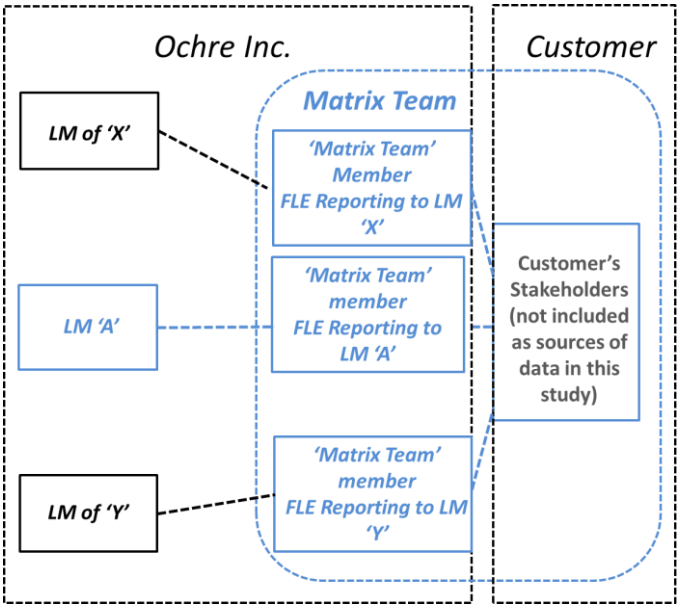

Figure 26 Matrix Team Approach in Ochre Inc. during FY14

In this model, the FLE reporting to LM 'A', is in a matrix team alongside FLEs who report to managers 'X' and 'Y', all of whom have gathered in pursuit of a value creation deal with the customer and the stakeholders they will interact with within their customer. Matrix team members could be placed in a different function or countries, though most were reported to be based mainly in the UK. This is understood to have meant that working on value creation deals in a matrix team meant FLEs using their time and direction of effort differently compared to the way they developed deals previously, firstly in finding ways to identify and connect with different external stakeholders outside of the network within a customer that FLEs typically had worked with before and secondly by adapting to the challenges of working within a matrix team.

Working in a matrix team reportedly meant FLEs spent much more of their time finding ways to navigate the large internal terrain within Ochre Inc. while trying to influence colleagues to support the value creation deal the matrix team was trying to secure. This is understood to have meant working with other sales FLEs, both in the matrix team and

also those not part of the matrix team but who have known experience, expertise or understanding that could help the matrix team.

This is understood to have included sales consultants, who were internal Ochre Inc. experts who provided the technological, and increasingly organisational and business expertise; Ochre Inc. operations who were responsible for structuring the 'deal' from a project management and implementation perspective; 'commercial', who negotiated the final financial aspects of the value creation; and, their own LMs or other senior managers who may be required to support the 'deal' internally to help it through each stage of its development.

This is understood to require to have been carried out while FLEs were trying to build trust with other matrix team members where each was conscious that all were individually incentivised which could promote selfish behaviours from matrix team colleagues, while reportedly all under significant pressure from senior managers to make the matrix team successful in achieving a value creation deal agreement with a customer.

> *"So you get certain lines of business that will just not talk to anybody else and do not see any reason to talk to anyone else. So you've got that dilemma. You've got the head of the company saying work as cross line of business but you've got individuals whose behaviours are dictated by compensation, saying, "No, I do not want to do that". So that makes it difficult." Conor – FLE*

Among the 23 FLEs in the study, very few common discretionary activities emerged that all 23 carried out in relation to matrix team and cross functional working. This may reflect that at the time of the study this was still a 'new' style of operating, which may have meant that fewer areas of universal discretionary activity had developed.

The discretionary activities that were found were categorised and reviewed in relation to FLEs' actual achieved individual performance, the results of which are outlined in Table 14.

Table 14 FLE Discretionary Activity for Working in Matrix Teams

FLE Discretionary Activity for Working in 'Matrix Teams'	**Association with Actual Individual Performance Achieved**
Building reciprocity within matrix teams	Common across many but not all interviewees, regardless of performance achieved in FY14
Creating a shared focus on a customer proposition	
Protecting your allocation - aggressively if needed	Mainly found among those who achieved their individual target in FY14

The category of FLE discretionary activity identified as most common among the FLEs in the study was 'reciprocity', having emerged from the accounts of 19 of the 23 FLEs in the study. 'Reciprocity' involved FLEs using discretionary activity to exchange ideas, effort and knowledge between matrix team members.

This is understood to have generated increased collaboration and cohesion between team members, which then meant increased instances of matrix team members helping each other out, creating trust within the matrix team and an increase in finding ways of creating a joint benefit for all team members, and supporting individual rewards. For some FLEs this was extended to reportedly selling each other's products outside of the matrix team surroundings in the pursuit of goodwill between matrix team members.

> *"Err we all go around sort of selling each ... well we all sell each other's product." Jasper – FLE*

It is also understood to have involved FLEs using their discretion to take on multiple responsibilities within a matrix team in order to help build a large deal. This could mean FLEs within the matrix team leading or supporting as required.

> *"You could lead a deal, you can support a deal or you can have nothing to do with a deal and, and somebody might just come in and you wouldn't even know about it. That's great." Amir – FLE*

The next most common use of discretion, found in 17 of the 23 FLEs in the study, was to develop a 'shared focus on a customer proposition' meaning they were understood to have developed an agreed approach to what the customer's business problem was, how

the products and services they would provide could meet that need and how the customer would be convinced of this, so that misunderstandings could be minimised and each team member could understand how to contribute effectively.

> *"And we, through relationships, through just tenacity of just, you know, you know sticking on with, you're making the wrong decision, you know, and trying to then find a price point that worked, working fabulously as a team." Janet – FLE*

'Reciprocity' and 'shared focus on a customer proposition' are understood to have allowed strong relationships to develop in some matrix team which appear to have aided the development of collaboration, cohesion and trust between team members.

> *"We built really good relationships within the account, and that's the reason why we won, it's because we worked together and we built relationships." Fiona – FLE*

The second category of FLE discretionary activity found in nine of the 23 FLEs, six of whom achieved their individual personal target during FY14, was the FLE discretionary activity 'protecting your allocation - aggressively if needed'. It was reported that, because of an incentive system that prioritised individual attainment over a matrix team goal, situations arose where individual FLEs sought opportunities to benefit themselves ahead of their colleagues, meaning FLEs could find themselves in situations where their share, known as the 'allocation', could be jeopardised.

> *"But there's a balance as well, you know you have to also look after your own product line and make sure that's been positioned." Fiona – FLE*

When this happened the FLE was understood to try and use their own discretion to protect their 'allocation', with the main approach reported being firmly persuasive in defence of your 'allocation'.

> *"So it's, it's about um maybe negotiating harder on certain aspects and less hard on, on other aspects." Sid – FLE*

It was reported this could also mean taking care that you are always in a position where you could 'spot' someone who would 'attack' your 'allocation.'

> *"So your game plan in those situations is to get into that and control it and be as close as you can to the spreadsheet which then divvies out um how people get compensated….the guy who controls the spreadsheet controls the compensation." Jasper – FLE*

Though at times this is understood from seven of the 11 LMs and 15 of the 23 FLEs to have become tense and required to be enforced aggressively

> *"And then it just becomes an absolute knife fight….[then] it's a knife fight basically." Jasper – FLE*

When the FLEs felt their influence was insufficient it was explained that they had to rely on the LM for support to protect their 'allocation', especially if the situation was elevated to more senior stakeholders inside Ochre Inc.

> *"So what should happen is the key account director is final arbitrator and then as it goes up towards David's [Oswald] level there is other arbitration." Jasper – FLE*

Therefore a number of relatively new discretionary approaches that FLEs used are understood to have emerged prior to and during FY14 when working in a cross functional working environment in a matrix team while developing large value creation deals. Some of this is understood to have relied on FLEs developing new discretionary activities to support this. LMs are understood to have carried out 'develops team ecosystem' through discretionary practices, i.e. *helping manage customers in a matrix team, supporting FLEs' internal network building, guidance on matrix team working* and *involving matrix team members*, all of which were understood to represent the LM carrying out the discretionary practices grouped together as *providing cross functional guidance*.

These discretionary practices were understood to influence the FLEs' discretion in such a way that they cultivated the networked connections, 'reciprocity' and shared understandings that they were understood as needing to have for the best chance of succeeding in a cross functional environment where matrix team working was still relatively new in FY14. Each of these findings will now be explained in detail.

5.4.1.1 Helping Manage Customers in a Matrix Team

Nine of the 11 LMs in the study and 14 of the 23 FLEs provided examples of the people management practices used by LMs when 'helping manage customers in a matrix team'. Most of the LMs described using discretionary practices to encourage FLEs to use their own discretion to proactively develop the new relationships necessary for them to broaden the network within their customer, which they would need to do in order to develop a compelling business case to sell a value creation deal.

> *"It was about guiding my team, connecting with the right people and getting them to build the relationships, so they owned that eco-system of relationship with the customer, the partners, you know and other people within Ochre." Alan – LM*

This was because LMs described feeling that without this encouragement an FLE might lack the confidence or motivation to do this.

> *"They just needed that extra kind of push to sort of say look, you're already going in there, but you're going in there for one meeting and then leaving again. Well why do you not go for that one meeting, have the meeting and spend the rest of the day there because you'll pick up more?" Michael – LM*

As well as being understood to have helped develop confidence and therefore motivation in FLEs, seven LMs described supporting the development of ability by helping FLEs learn new approaches and techniques so that FLEs could use their discretion to uncover the types of insight that would lead a customer to be convinced that Ochre Inc. understood their business problems and how these could be solved, when *generating opportunities*, which is understood to lead to an increase in the likelihood of that customer agreeing to the value creation deal.

> *"So that's one of things [the skills] I'm trying to foster and develop inside of my team, to drive....them forward." Paul – LM*

This was understood to encourage FLEs to use their discretion to provide their customer with confidence that the FLE and matrix team members truly appreciated their problems.

"And we should be selling benefits on the basis of what money is this customer trying to save, or what opportunity is the customer trying to create…" Paul – LM

LMs described helping FLEs understand that they were doing this as part of a matrix team so would encourage their direct reports to think of customer problems in this way, acting as coaches to encourage the FLE to use a matrix team perspective, not just their own. LMs are understood to have used discretionary practices to help foster this approach in their own team members as members of a matrix team who were not their direct reports.

"I have a set of, um, virtual, I have 34 virtual people as well, as well as my own directs…guys who I just sort of keep enabled and work with." Alan – LM

Because a different type of selling conversation was being held in value creation deals, the LMs are understood to have typically involved themselves with their FLEs to help them and their fellow matrix team members learn how to operate in this new paradigm. Using discretionary practices they described how they would 'coach' their FLE and fellow matrix team members on how to handle objections or setbacks they might encounter and were unfamiliar with in this situation and the customer stakeholders involved.

"In other words, you're going to be continually presented with objections why we cannot, why we cannot, why we cannot. And, er, and navigating through that set of objections and the people who raise those objections." Jeff – LM

This changed environment is understood therefore to have meant a change in the way LMs used their people management discretion to help develop in their FLEs how to understand the customer issues. Some LMs are understood to have achieved this in innovative ways, carrying out this discretionary practice by organising and running training sessions to help FLEs better understand what was involved in developing the financial structures of complex value creation 'deals' achieved by a matrix team.

"We'd end up with, um, you know people coming to speak about various bits of Ochre. Whether that be renewals, or whether that be the pre-sales people, all

that sort of thing. So that was good as a, a learning curve. Um, or the finance team or something um." Jennifer – FLE

Only three of the LMs in the study were found to have organised these, though other LMs in the study may also have done similar things and they, or their FLEs, did not report it at interview. Two of those in the study who ran these sessions encouraged members of their FLEs' matrix team to attend, leading to attendees of 30-35 people. These approaches from a minority of LMs are suggested as clearly targeted towards the development of direct FLEs in terms of their abilities to use their own discretion when dealing with customers and also the ability of other matrix team members and how they used their discretion.

5.4.1.2 Supporting FLEs' Internal Network Building

This discretionary practice was mostly found among LMs who were managing above average teams and their FLEs. Seven of the 11 LMs, six of whom were managing an above average team, and 12 of the 23 FLEs, nine of whom were FLEs who achieved their individual performance target in FY14, provided examples of how LMs used discretionary practices to support and help FLEs when developing their internal Ochre Inc. network as a part of cross functional working.

"Yeah, one of them is, is just, you know, the internal, you know, the internals of the business, navigating through the structure of the organisations, erm. You .....have to go and find it, erm, and understand, you know, how it delivers value, at what point in the process." Jeff – LM

This was described as allowing FLEs freedom to use their own discretion more effectively to pursue their individual performance targets. It was commonplace in the study for the LM to act as a 'guide' or 'navigator', helping their FLEs find and access people or departments who could aid them.

"Directing me to the people who can provide answers." Amir – FLE

This meant an LM having a good grasp of internal networks, or a good understanding of how they might work.

"It was, you know, I have a bit of an understanding, I knew how Ochre worked, so I knew, I knew what was required to be done straightaway." Michael – LM

They then had to make that knowledge accessible and available to their FLEs in a way that would allow the FLEs to use that understanding to apply their own discretionary activity more effectively. This discretionary practice appeared most effective in influencing how an FLE used their own discretion when the LM provided guidance in a coaching or respectful way, rather than as a direct instruction.

"Because…..I wouldn't say I lack confidence, but sometimes if I'm trying something new it wouldn't take a lot to push me back." Stephen – FLE

This is possibly because as well as helping the FLE navigate the organisation this also seems to have bolstered the FLE's confidence in their LM and also made the FLE feel more motivated.

"He leaves you… He guides you…..well it's, it's, he, he motivates me because he's, he, err because of the things that I've mentioned. You know he, he has um, he, he leaves me alone when I need to be left alone…" Sid – FLE

In addition to being guided rather than instructed, it is understood that FLEs valued having access to this expertise whenever it was required. Being able to access the LM was reported as something the majority of FLEs perceived as important.

"When you're struggling and you're out there, you really need to have people around you to be going, have you tried this, have you tried that?" Colin – FLE

They were understood to have been encouraged to share their own views in a way that let the LM explore and understand what they were trying to achieve.

"From a style point of view, quite a lot of the guys will come into me and say, can we whiteboard this deal? And what they mean is…..exactly that. Um, they'll, they will sit and we'll just…[points to large whiteboard with diagrams…] Well, we'll just do, you know, sort of, um, a bunch of pseudo-mind maps of, what do we know? Where do we know it? And all, all that kind of thing." Terry – LM

Most LMs who described influencing their FLEs, despite reported constraints in time, described finding an approach that worked for them and this was reflected in the accounts of FLEs. However, not all LMs were described as having succeeded in balancing availability for their FLEs by providing freedom for them to use their own discretion. An FLE 'Donald' reported that his internal network changed drastically prior to FY14 due to changes to his accounts and with the matrix team he was able to work with inside Ochre Inc. to sell to these customers.

> *"I think there's been, err, we've been subject to a lot of change in personnel in, err, [accounts]. A lot of change in the structure of managing the accounts…..um, and we've lost some seriously key personnel [from Ochre Inc.]." Donald – FLE*

He described his LM as being unwilling to apply their discretion to help him solve this problem which he attributed to the LM failing to appreciate the nature of cross functional and matrix team working.

> *"I think, err, a lack of understanding of how the business works." Donald – FLE*

His view was that his LM failed to understand the nature of the problem he was facing and instead of helping him develop his internal network instead created a focus for him to develop an externally focused development plan.

> *"All the normal stuff that you, you get from, um, sales campaigns, and when the deal's going to be signed. Rather than perhaps saying, actually have you tried to do this?" Donald – FLE*

His LM suggested in their interview that they found the environment of the matrix team a challenge, partly due to time constraints during FY14, but also, reinforcing Donald's view, because in their perception the main focus for her FLEs ought to be on developing customer networks rather than internal networks that were viewed by them as a distraction.

> *"I could point the finger…did your business case stack up and did you have a [customer] sponsor and if you did not have those …in the customer saying, "I need that product…" that's where your problem is!" Rita – LM*

This was the only evidence in the study that an LM had used their 'discretion' to not support an FLE when they were trying to develop an internal network. However, the study did find that the LMs who described using this discretionary practice, something echoed in the accounts of their direct FLEs, were those who managed the most successful teams in the study, with one exception. This may suggest that these LMs used their discretion to influence the discretionary activity of their FLEs in a way that may have increased the likelihood of those FLEs achieving their individual targets by helping them use their discretion in a way that let them navigate the complex environment inside Ochre Inc. during FY14 and so develop the internal support to achieve successful value creation deals.

5.4.1.3 Guidance on Matrix Team Working

Seven of the 11 LMs provided examples of how LMs used discretionary practices for *guidance on matrix team working*, though only ten of the 23 FLEs described how LMs carried out this discretionary practice. Much of the way LMs carried out this discretionary practice are understood to have involved LMs educating their FLEs on some of the tactics that would be required to avoid internal conflicts arising in the first place, such as having a better shared understanding of responsibilities and agreements at the outset.

> *"What I impress on the guys is to say you need to have that, you need to have that understood and agreed upfront." Paul – LM*

This was also found to be coupled with LMs using their discretion to be available to their FLEs so they could intervene when tensions arose within a matrix team, which in the accounts shared involved encouraging the FLEs so they were motivated and confident enough to defend their view or approach.

> *"At the end of the day one leads to the other, um, and then it's about ….sharp elbows." Paul – LM*

FLE accounts indicate that the LMs who carried out this discretionary practice with a combination of instruction and education, while also being available, were more favourably viewed by FLEs in the study.

"And so I think the support that Jeff…. I think that support network [he provides] is really, really important as well." Janet – FLE

Some LMs were quite clear that they deliberately applied their discretionary practices in this area this way, actively educating their FLEs and intervening only as required to answer questions or coach them, while the FLE built their matrix team.

"You know, so it was about guiding my team, connecting with the right people and getting them to build the relationships, so they owned that eco-system of relationship with the customer, the partners, you know and other people within Ochre." Alan – LM

The purpose of this approach is described as being to make the LMs' FLEs more successful when using their discretion to integrate with and work with matrix team members and other internal stakeholders.

"So it was really, so my approach really is how do I build, keep that eco-system as big as possible, how do I make sure all the sales guys have a big eco-system, both internally and externally……" Alan – LM

5.4.1.4 Involving Matrix Team Members

Three LMs were found to have influenced their FLEs using the discretionary practice involving matrix team members within their FLEs' matrix team. This meant that as well as deliberately influencing the discretion their FLEs used, they were found to have taken steps to influence the discretion of other members in the matrix team as well. This was understood to be because they took some responsibility for the discretion used by FLEs who did not report directly to them within the matrix team.

"I have a set of, um, virtual, I have 34 virtual people as well, as well as my own directs." Alan – LM

To do this, these LMs were found to involve and engage the members of their FLEs' matrix team in informal meetings or team building activities and training events.

"Um, so I've sort of, my approach is always to build a big team of people, even though they do not all report to me, who are sort of my, the team that works together." Alan – LM

In some situations, LMs were found to add matrix team members to the invitation list for team meetings ostensibly only for their direct FLEs. This is explained as being done with the deliberate intention of strengthening the bonds between matrix team members.

> *"Because you know it's about the bonds that people in, and not just my direct team, this was the, you know the wider eco-team. You know because it's those bonds, those, that sort of sense of belonging that, one keeps the guys together, um, and makes them want to work together and you know brings out the best of everybody." Alan – LM*

However, it is also understood to have been done to develop matrix team members and direct FLEs and so develop their abilities and confidence when using their discretion to develop and construct value creation deals.

> *"I think that's part of the role that I'm doing more of now, is I am helping you know my virtual team, enabling them to have the confidence." Alan – LM*

As well understood for building competence and confidence, it appears this type of discretionary practice was also intended by those LMs who operated this way to help make sure that the matrix team were able to use their respective discretion as members to seek help or support from LMs, or through them other stakeholders, when it was required.

> *"So albeit I have a team of five actually there could be sixteen people whom I called on a Monday when we talk. We have this thing called 'the war room' and it's literally - it's not a forecast call, it's like, okay guys, what's going on this week that's going to influence, influence the outcome? What meet, what key meetings are happening? Who needs to be there?" Keith – LM*

This was reported as allowing LMs access to practical oversight of complex value creation deals which typically involved multiple stakeholders and therefore is reported as creating greater probability for confusion. Therefore, as well as influencing the discretion of the FLEs, this was understood to allow the LM a better understanding of where and how their discretion might be required to support their direct team members, but also their matrix team members. It was reported that when confusion did happen

'deals' were placed at risk because FLEs started to apply their discretion in service of their personal benefit, not for the benefit of the matrix team.

> *"And most of the virtual team that we work with did not either, which was hence the reason why it was going like that, because nobody understood it and nobody cared about it, so they sold other things." Michael – LM*

Therefore the small number of LMs who carried out this discretionary practice are understood to have influenced their FLEs' discretion intended to make their individual FLEs more successful, while also influencing other FLEs in the matrix team in a similar way.

> *"So our relationship is now with these guys, is on a complete different level. And that's what I mean by collaboration…… multiple levels." Keith – LM*

They are also understood to have created some structure for their FLEs, during what was a widely reported confusing period of operations, as a new way of working was being slowly understood and learned by FLEs and LMs alike.

Finally, LMs described using their discretionary practice to influence matrix team members to generate greater reciprocity, obligations or trust between matrix teams. This was reported as helping those within the matrix team to be successful by enhancing the way they worked together and therefore influencing the type of FLE discretion that resulted from this interaction in a way understood to support value creation deals.

> *"Yeah, I mean because you know this was actually part of my, um, the team that... So my team actually did not need the revenue, it was the, um, the virtual team, because they are vertically based, so that industry unit needed as much revenue as it could." Alan – LM*

Therefore LMs are understood to have used their people management discretion in this discretionary practice to influence the way their FLEs used their own discretion in the matrix team, helping develop the way the matrix team operated and in some cases influencing the discretion of other matrix team members.

5.4.2 Summary of Develops FLE Ecosystem

This section contained the details of *develops FLE ecosystem,* an example of LM people management discretion identified by the study. LMs are understood to have carried out *develops FLE ecosystem* through discretionary practices, which have been grouped together thematically based on the understanding of what FLE level outcome they were intended to produce. *Develops FLE ecosystem* is the grouping of discretionary practices reportedly used by LMs to influence the way FLEs used their discretion to *helping manage customers in a matrix team*, *supporting FLEs' internal network building*, *guidance on matrix team working* and *involving matrix team members* within the Ochre Inc. 'cross functional context. This LM discretionary practice is understood to have encouraged their direct FLEs and also in some cases other FLEs in matrix teams to use their discretionary activity in ways likely to lead to individual performance outcomes being achieved. The discretionary practice 'supports FLEs' internal network building' was only found in one LM who was not among the above average group. This is illustrated conceptually in Figure 27.

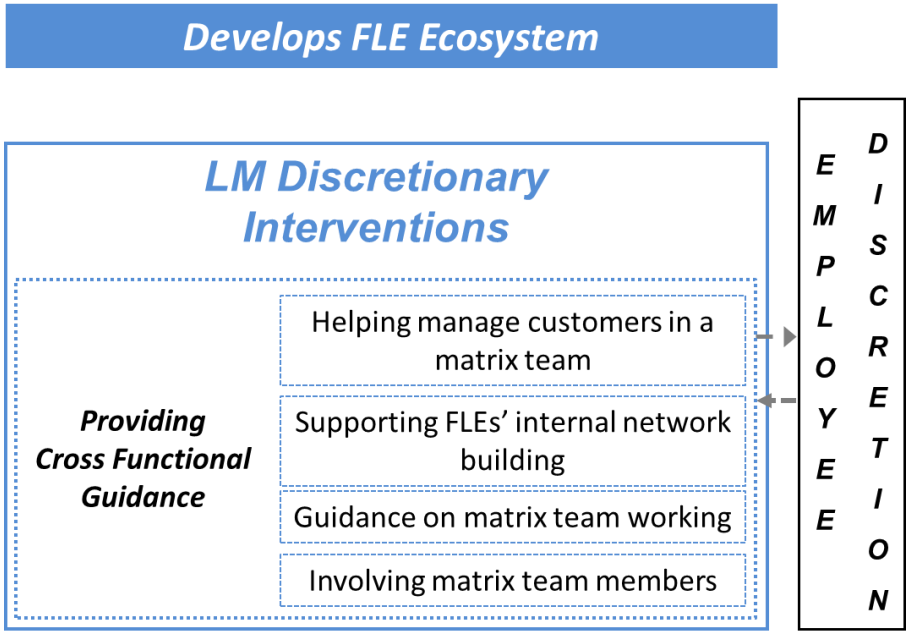

Figure 27 People Management Discretion – Develops FLE Ecosystem

In the model above, the LM discretionary intervention *Develops FLE Ecosystem* is comprised of discretionary practices which are grouped as 'providing cross functional guidance' and which LMs are understood to have used to influence individual FLE

discretionary activity and that of those FLEs working with their direct FLEs in matrix teams during FY14.

5.5 Provides FLE Shielding

Provides FLE shielding is the grouping of discretionary practices reportedly used by LMs to influence the environment around their direct FLEs, thus protecting the discretionary activity of their direct FLEs from being interrupted from being applied to the pursuit of their individual targets. LMs are understood to have carried out *provides FLE shielding* through discretionary practices, which have been grouped together thematically based on the understanding of what FLE level outcome they were intended to produce. These are combined thematically based on their understood intended outcome: *shadowing deals*, which includes *influencing LMs or other FLEs* and *protecting FLE allocations; influencing upwards*, which includes *'Sandbagging'/hiding information from senior managers* and *relationship between LM and direct superior*. These discretionary practices were understood to influence the way FLEs use their discretion by influencing those around their FLEs who might intervene and disrupt how the FLEs were carrying out their discretionary activity. This is illustrated in Figure 28.

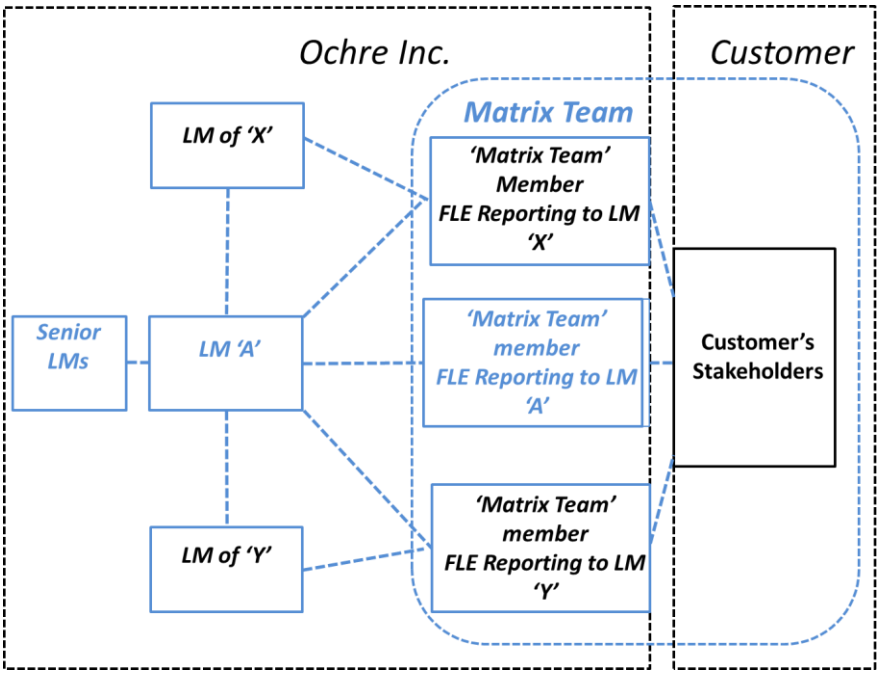

Figure 28 FLE Shielding – Stakeholders' LMs' Influence

Each of these findings will now be explained in detail.

5.5.1 Shadowing Deals

Shadowing deals is the grouping of people management discretionary practice: *influencing other LMs or FLEs* and *protecting FLE allocations*. The first, 'influencing other LMs or FLEs' discretionary practice was something a small minority of LMs in the study used their people management discretion to do, based on their accounts, with only three making reference to doing this, though 21 of the 23 FLEs made reference to having witnessed or experienced this during FY14.

> *"Um, and at the end of the day one leads to the other, um, and then it's about that if a, you know, to take sharp elbows that's about, that's at a rep level, that's at my level in terms of my peers and my management. But also my manager's level in terms of what's going on at his level." Paul – LM*

Experienced LMs were understood to carry out this discretionary practice without the knowledge of their FLEs as it is understood they were practised in monitoring what their FLEs were involved in and those matters internally that might be materially important in threatening their FLEs' likelihood of individual success.

> *"I think, err strategic if that makes sense in terms of he looked across his patch and to make himself successful he tried to manipulate things. I think, I think [he's] a good manager." Jasper – LM*

To be effective at this, FLEs reported that their LM needed to have a good 'network' so they could be in a position to influence other LMs or FLEs connected to matrix teams to which the direct FLEs were connected. When an LM lacked this type of 'visibility' it was viewed as a concern by FLEs.

> *"Visibility as a manager, not lack of visibility. To you and to other people, both of them are crucial as a manager in Ochre Inc." Fiona – FLE*

'Visibility' was understood to mean, whether in reporting meetings, general meetings, or working in informal situations, the LM having enough ability to alter perceptions and actions of other LMs or stakeholders connected to FLEs through a matrix team. If the LM was perceived as lacking capability in this area by FLEs they felt it was a problem for them.

"And I think err [our] team found it very difficult…..James is a, you know, is quite a, a quite shy character." Cary – FLE

Some LMs revealed they worked closely with other LMs as allies, which was understood to lead to greater overall 'visibility' or 'influence'.

"So Stanley [another LM] and I work together. Two sales teams. Erm, and you know, without washing too much dirty linen, [we're]….very strong. Very strong…..Stanley and I run the sector." Aidan – LM

It was reported that problems emerged typically as value creation deals were nearing completion because this was when the tensions arose and people began to argue about the share they would receive for the sale. At this time the LM needed to be aware of what was happening and intervene or the FLEs could find themselves outflanked and their share of the 'deal' could be lost and given to someone else in the matrix team.

The second discretionary practice, *protecting FLE allocations* was referenced by nine LMs and 16 FLEs. The consensus from the study is that LMs could not just be aware of the value creation deals that FLEs were using their discretion to try and secure, but also had to be able to intervene to make sure that the FLE's share was not threatened by the discretionary practices of other LMs or their FLEs. So, and being aware of the FLEs' discretionary value creation deal activity, they also had to be willing to use their own discretionary practice to become involved.

"I really like Paul [LM in FY14] but I think Philip [previous LM] is just, erm, kind of more effective in terms of getting things done; a bit more driven and… I think Paul's really good but in some ways a little bit too laid-back for his own good in an Ochre context." Albert – FLE

FLEs were anxious about their share being be diluted or reduced as the final deal agreement was finalised.

"This is part of the piranha or the, er, hyena infested waters that are within Ochre. You get, you bring home the bacon and then everyone rips it up. Er, and it was a sentiment that I put to my manager. Because my manager said look, 'Lionel', do not worry about this deal, er, you know, so I trusted that… [he'd

protect me] Erm, er, you worry about all these other areas, so that's what I did." Lionel – FLE

From the study this appears a legitimate concern as nine LMs and 14 FLEs recalled incidents they knew of or were involved in of this nature.

"You know, I mean that's the funny thing, right, is that you know there's as much competition internally as there is externally." Alan – LM

LMs were understood to use their discretionary practice to speak to other LMs about claims made against a large value creation deal or the particular FLE making the claim, or both. This reportedly would mean challenging various individuals, who could be unknown to you as an LM but against whom you were required to defend the allocation of your FLE, but doing so in a way that created as little ill feeling as possible. Otherwise the LM's influence, as it was understood, may actually diminish.

"And you find yourself having to apportion things in a certain way that impacts people, and navigating that in the organisation, particularly if you're new, I mean you have to go and do those things and you find yourself having to have conversations with people you've never seen in your life." Jeff – LM

Tensions reportedly could escalate as significant sums of money were involved as LMs used their discretionary practices to ensure that their FLEs' product line was the one included in the final sale.

"I mean if you've got six lines of business in a, in a proposal, I mean you'll find yourself, you know with three or four managers hovering around you saying, you know, where is my money?" Jeff – LM

FLEs reported that they would try to defend their own allocations, but it was acknowledged that without the LM's involvement this was very difficult.

Whether this was because it gave FLEs confidence to use their discretion to defend their allocation or whether LM involvement actually influenced the outcome, was not clear, though a combination of both being factors in determining the outcome was entirely possible. However, it was clear that an FLE knowing their LM would intervene effectively using their discretionary practice gave the FLEs greater confidence and

motivation to continue to apply their own discretion in pursuit of their own performance targets.

> *"I still struggle with it myself and just sort of go, do you think I'm doing all right? You know, do you think I'm doing the right thing? Is that the right thing? And so I think the support that Jeff….I think that support….is really, really important as well." Janet – FLE*

Only four FLEs indicated that they had lost out on a sales 'allocation' they had expected to receive in a deal; one of these was accepted by the FLE as their responsibility for being too trusting, while others were understood to have involved international sales over which the LMs in the study had no meaningful influence as the rules were defined in the US so allowed them no discretionary influence. Only one LM, 'Rita' shared that she had failed to prevent an 'allocation' being taken from their FLE during FY14. If LMs failed to use their discretionary practice in this way then FLEs reported that they found it harder to maintain their motivation to continue to use their discretion to develop value creation deals, something understood to damage further opportunity for them to meet their individual performance target.

5.5.2 Influencing Upwards

Influencing upwards was found to have been comprised of two different types of people management discretionary practice*: 'sandbagging'/hiding information from senior managers to protect FLEs* and *relationship management with direct superior*. The first discretionary practice, *'sandbagging'/hiding information from senior managers to protect FLEs*, was something only five LMs in the study volunteered using their people management discretion to do. With the shift from value capture selling, this was becoming a greater challenge for FLEs to cope with because of the longer timeframes involved.

> *"But we have to chase, you have to chase that short term dollar in order to make the, you know, to make the quarterly numbers, so we have to do that, but it's about, it's about, yeah okay, we'll make that quarterly number, but you won't necessarily jeopardise, you know, to pull in a deal that's, that's a million that's*

going to jeopardise five that's going to close a month later, you know, why would you…?" Sid – FLE

When LMs were understood to be able to help FLEs manage how this was done, given the pressures of stakeholders and systems within Ochre Inc. during FY14, it was viewed as helpful in how the FLE was able to use their own discretion. This involved support, and helping the FLE in managing how ongoing value creation deals were reported.

"X amount in um, err Q1 and Y amount in Q2 and da da da da da. Um I don't necessarily work to that, but the, the reason why I'm able to do that is because um I think my manager." Sid – FLE

This reportedly allowed the FLE to use their discretion in pursuit of larger 'deals' by allowing the FLE to operate in a more relaxed, less anxious manner, which is likely to make their decision making and planning, and their interactions, more productive and effective.

"Everybody talks about getting their year done as early as possible. Um last year it was actually, last year was actually a couple of transactions but it was the same account. Number was done in Q1 and then the number was blown in Q4 and that was, that was really it. Um this year the number was um blown in Q3 and then um potentially a, another significant transaction in, in, in Q4." Sid – FLE

'Sandbagging' was reported as a discretionary practice response to the pressure from quarterly reporting of a US-owned corporate being in conflict with the longer term cycle involved in securing value creation deals. Some LMs described using parallel reporting systems of their own design to keep track of value creation deals separate from how they reported this internally. One set of reports was explained to have been used to track their FLE deals but was withheld from other's scrutiny, while another contained the information required from them at the end of each quarter for corporate reporting. This discretionary practice of deliberately underreporting what deals were worth and hiding them and their true value, and when they would come to fruition, was referred to by LMs as 'sandbagging'.

"So sandbagging is, is a phrase that we would use…a deal in customer X that is not in the sales forecasting system, and it's worth 3 million, and it's definitely going to happen in [quarter]….but I know it's going to happen in [quarter] 2…[that's] sandbagging. When the time is right, I'll put it in. So, we do that all the time." Jim – LM

It is not known from the study how many LMs actually carried out this discretionary practice and it was understood not to be condoned by senior managers; however, it was referred to by five of the 11 LMs as the type of practice they were comfortable doing, with a mix of above average (three) and below average (two) LMs using the practice. In addition to 'sandbagging', some LMs are understood to have dealt with the reporting challenge by refusing to adhere to all demands for information so that this did not interfere with the way they directed their FLEs in terms of using their efforts.

"So you've got to push back." Jim – LM

The second discretionary practice in the discretionary practice *influencing upwards* is 'relationship management with direct superior'. All LMs in the study felt that when their immediate superior held 'political capital', meaning that their direct superior was influential among senior managers within Ochre Inc., that this was an advantage.

"He's got that ability to go talk to the right person to make sure that the influence is being, and the buttons are being pushed in the right way." Paul – LM

This understanding of the LMs in the study was matched by a relationship between those who felt their immediate senior manager possessed 'political capital' and whether the LM was in the above or below average group. Those in the former group all felt their immediate superior held 'political' capital, but only one in the latter group, although there may a number of other reasons for this relationship to exist. Two of the LMs described proactively seeking to develop their relationship in order to gain maximum benefit from their direct superiors' 'political capital'. When this was successful then the LM and their direct FLEs were able to rely on support from the LM's direct superior, which could be used for the benefit of the FLE's discretion as part of a matrix team developing a value creation deal.

"[He gives you] reassurance, support, guidance and direction." Jim – LM

This could include having a shared plan on how the LM and their team will be helped so that the LM's people management discretion and their FLEs' discretion result in more likelihood of successful outcomes for the LMs' individual FLEs.

> *"So this was an agreement [with direct superior] basically we make the number, we get each of those sales people over the line." Paul – LM*

As well as providing 'political capital' the direct superior also gave the LM more confidence in their own ability to use their people management discretion. In addition if the LM's confidence was reduced and they needed someone to help restore some self-belief, the direct superior would help with that.

> *"[LM's LM] basically said look you know you've got fantastic abilities but you've got to channel them in the right way here. And it was not until he helped me realise what I could do, and make a difference, and where I needed to leave it alone, that I realised where I could make a difference here." Alan – LM*

Consequently a good relationship with their direct superior also provided the LM a way of building their own confidence to use their people management discretion to help their own FLEs use their discretion to achieve their individual performance outcomes.

5.5.3 Summary of Provides FLE Shielding

This section contained the details of provides FLE shielding, an example of LM people management discretion identified by the study. LMs are understood to have carried out *provides FLE shielding* through discretionary practices, which have been grouped together thematically based on the understanding of what FLE level outcome they were intended to produce. *Provides FLE shielding* is the grouping of discretionary practices reportedly used by LMs to influence interruptions from other Ochre Inc. stakeholders on the discretion of their direct FLEs, through the use of their discretion *influencing LMs or other FLEs*, *protecting FLE allocations*, *'sandbagging'/hiding information from senior managers to protect FLEs* and *relationship management between LM and direct superior*, within the Ochre Inc. cross functional context. These are understood to have encouraged direct FLEs to use their discretionary activity in ways likely to lead to

individual performance outcomes being achieved by shielding them from those who may interfere or interrupt their use of their discretion. This is illustrated conceptually in Figure 29.

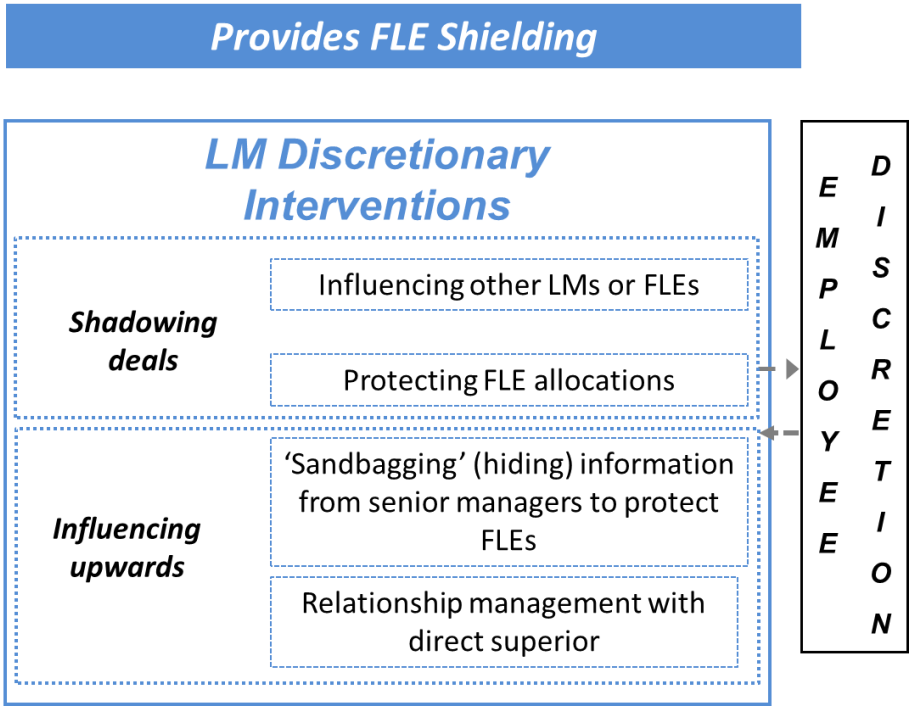

Figure 29 People Management Discretion – Provides FLE Shielding

In the model above, the LM discretionary intervention *provides FLE shielding* is comprised of discretionary practices which are grouped as *shadowing deals* and *influencing upwards* through which LMs are understood to have used their influence to disrupt any interference upon the individual FLE discretionary activity of their FLEs in pursuit of their individual performance targets during FY14.

5.6 LM People Management Discretion Chapter Conclusions

This chapter presented the case study findings to address the research question by explaining how LMs in the study are understood to have used their people management discretion to influence the FLE performance outcomes achieved by the end of FY14. These are presented in Table 15.

Table 15 Summary of Identified LM Discretionary Interventions

LM Non-HRM Discretionary Interventions	Groupings of Clusters	LM Discretionary Practice Clusters
Produces Team Contextualisation	Designing Directed Endeavour	Establishing aims, priorities and needs
	Designing Social Endeavour	Sets standards and expectations
		Defines required team dynamic
	Designing Capability for Endeavour	Defines team capability needed
		Incorporates considerations of FLE development
Cultivates Team Environment	Influencing the Dynamic within the Group	Team building
		Creating a 'safe' space
		Encouraging team to problem solve
	Influencing the Dynamic between LM and Individual FLEs	Maintaining individual motivation
		Being available for FLEs
		Relationships with FLEs
	Influencing the Dynamic between LM and Overall Group	Building credibility
		Protecting from external pressure
Shapes FLE Focus	Prioritisation Management	Setting priorities
		Encouraging long term thinking but pragmatic thinking
	Focusing FLE Activity Management	Helping FLE time management
		Monitoring FLE activity
Develops FLE Ecosystem	Providing Cross Functional Guidance	Helping manage customers in a matrix team
		Supporting FLEs' internal network building
		Guidance on 'matrix team' working
		Involving 'matrix team' members
Provides FLE Shielding	Shadowing Deals	Influencing LMs or other FLEs
		Protecting FLE allocations
	Influencing Upwards	'Sandbagging' (hiding) information from senior managers to protect FLEs
		Relationship management between LM and direct superior

How each of the five presented types of discretionary practice were understood to have been carried out and a detailed examination of how each discretionary practice related to the discretionary activity of FLEs, was explained. Further, having developed a category of LM discretionary practices and understanding of FLE discretionary activity, these findings were then compared to the position each LM held in relation to the performance outcomes achieved by their FLEs.

This supports the suggestion that the LMs in the study who used discretionary practices to develop and guide FLEs in the grouping of discretionary practices *develops FLE ecosystem* and *provides FLE shielding* were almost entirely the LMs who managed the teams with the most number of individual FLEs who achieved their performance target, in other words the above average group. Of the LMs who were managing the teams

which were in the below average group, only one used some of these groupings of discretionary practices. These findings are demonstrated in Table 16.

Table 16 LM Discretionary Practices by Above or Below Average FLE Performance

LM Discretionary Interventions	Groupings of LM Discretionary Practices	LM Discretionary Practice Clusters	Activity found to have been carried out by the majority of LMs in the High Performing Group	Activity found to have been carried out by the majority of LMs in the Low Performing Group
Produce Team Contextualisation	Designing Directed Endeavour	Establishing aims, priorities and needs	x	x
	Designing Social Endeavour	Sets standards and expectations	x	x
		Defines required team dynamic	x	-
	Designing Capability for Endeavour	Defines team capability needed	x	x
		Incorporates considerations of FLE development	x	-
Cultivate Team Environment	Influencing the Dynamic within the Group	Team building	x	x
		Creating a 'safe' space	x	x
		Encouraging team to problem solve	x	-
	Influencing the Dynamic between LM and Individuals	Maintaining individual motivation	x	x
		Being available for FLEs	x	-
		Relationships with FLEs	x	-
	Influencing the Dynamic between LM and Overall Group	Building credibility	x	x
		Protecting from external pressure	x	-
Shapes FLE Focus	Prioritisation Management	Setting priorities	x	x
		Encouraging long term thinking but pragmatic thinking	x	-
	Focusing FLE Activity Management	Helping FLE time management	x	x
		Monitoring FLE activity	x	x
Develops FLE Ecosystem	Providing Cross Functional Guidance	Helping manage customers in 'matrix team'	x	x
		Supporting FLEs' internal network building	x	-
		Guidance on 'matrix team' working	x	-
		Involving 'matrix team' members	x	-
Provides FLE Shielding	Shadowing Deals	Influencing LMs or other FLEs	x	-
		Protecting FLE allocations	x	-
	Influencing Upwards	'Sandbagging'/hiding information from senior managers	-	-
		Relationship management with LM direct superior	x	-

By contrast the less successful LMs were less likely to use their discretion to influence their FLEs using the discretionary practices associated with *develops FLE ecosystem* or *provides FLE shielding* to influence the discretionary activity of their FLEs.

Therefore in summary, these findings reflect the accounts provided by FLEs as presented in this chapter, in which they reported valuing and benefiting from LMs helping them adapt to the new cross functional and matrix team context that was understood to be a significant feature in Ochre Inc. during FY14. This is suggested as having helped FLE discretion in two ways.

Firstly FLEs are understood to have benefited from their LMs helping them understand how to develop value creation deals with customers. While all LMs are understood to have developed team environments with their direct reports, those in the above average group are understood to have helped their FLEs use their discretionary activity to pursue achieving value creation deals while doing so within a matrix team. This appears from the data to have been both important to FLEs and a clear difference in discretionary practice approach among LMs. In short, the LMs who were found to describe using their discretion to help their FLEs use their own discretion to develop value creation deals in a 'matrix team environment' by including other matrix team members in their team building activities, making themselves available to help their FLEs through this change and helping their FLEs build the internal networks – reportedly a new feature of this cross functional working – were typically LMs of teams which contained the greatest number of individual FLEs who achieved their personal target in FY14.

Secondly, FLEs are understood to have benefited from their LMs using their discretionary practices to protect the FLE from reportedly unwanted and unhelpful intrusion from other Ochre Inc. stakeholders who were described as intervening in a way that interrupted an FLE from using their discretion in order to achieve their individual performance target. Those who were found to describe using their discretion to help protect how their FLEs used their own discretion by reportedly 'shadowing' FLEs' networks, as the FLE worked in a matrix team constructing a value creation deal, interrupting other stakeholders and who held a good relationship with their immediate superior, which may have made this use of their discretion easier, were also typically LMs of teams which contained the greatest number of individual FLEs who achieved their personal target in FY14.

It must be noted that while these explanations, for how LMs using their people management discretion influenced differences in influencing individual FLE performance, helped inform my understanding of the effect the discretionary practices have on individual FLE performance outcomes within this study, these particular findings would require further research to determine whether a causal connection existed.

5.7 LM People Management Discretionary Interventions to Influence Individual FLE Performance Outcomes Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the findings on how LMs used their discretion to carry out the HRM practices they had responsibilities for during FY14. Five types of LM HRM practice discretionary enactment were identified, two of which involved influences from other stakeholders within Ochre Inc. The next chapter (Chapter 6) will present the study findings on the way LMs used their non HRM people management discretion, influencing individual FLE performance outcomes.

6 LM People Management Discretionary Enactment of HRM Practices

This chapter presents the study findings on the way LMs used their people management discretion when enacting HRM practices to address the sub research question. In the study, LMs and FLEs were asked to outline HRM practices that they either used or experienced during FY14. This was used to help determine how "those actually used by a manager and their subordinates" (Paauwe et al., 2013:9) were enacted. Background interviews with two HRMBPs in the study provided insight into the HRM practices present in Ochre Inc. that LMs had responsibility for and used, and also what the intentions were for these HRM practices.

The findings from the analysis of the data this provided are now presented.

6.1 LM HRM Practice Responsibilities

Prior to FY14 it was explained by the HRMBP that Ochre Inc. had invested significant funds to create a 'Self-Serve HRM System'.

> *"So the corporation did a huge, erm, a huge activity. As I say, it went live last year, which was around consolidating everything into a one-stop shop." Deborah – HRMBP*

The use of a 'dot com' system which LMs and FLEs were meant to access so they could manage the various HRM processes required throughout the FLE lifecycle themselves (Boxall and Purcell, 2008), confirmed that Ochre Inc. had devolved HRM practice responsibilities to LMs.

The study identified three categories of HRM practice responsibilities that LMs are understood to have held in Ochre Inc. during FY14: FLE 'performance development', FLE 'reward', and FLE 'talent development'. These are illustrated in Table 17.

Table 17 LM People Management HRM Practice Responsibilities

Intention of HRM Practice	HRM Practice	Responsibilities
FLE Performance Development Ensure FLEs are able to meet performance aims of Ochre Inc.	*Annual Performance Review (APR)*	Devolved responsibility to LM and FLE for entire process
	Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)	Devolved responsibility to LM but worked with HRM business partners on the process if it progressed further
FLE Reward Ensure FLE pay is market relevant and rewards performance aims of Ochre Inc.	*Pay Review Boards (PRB)*	Shared responsibility between LM, HR and senior managers but worked with HRM business partners & senior managers throughout the process
FLE Talent Development Development of FLE's longer term potential.	*Talent Review Board (TRB)*	Devolved responsibility to LM and FLE but worked with HRM business partners & senior managers throughout the entire process

In addition to the responsibilities being devolved or shared with LMs found in the study, some responsibilities were also reported to have devolved to FLEs, providing a platform to house all the associated material needed for FLEs to manage aspects of their own FLE benefit and career management.

> *"It's, it's very self-service so it's more kind of signposting them to where they need to go……. you've got a checklist and then that will hyperlink you to where you need to go rather than trying to navigate around the dot com." Deborah – HRMBP*

FLEs were understood to hold responsibilities for their own development, from the initiation of the APR discussion to how they embraced and involved themselves in the HRM practice.

> *"The employee initiates the performance evaluation……that's then sent to the manager um as an initiated performance appraisal……." Deborah – HRMBP*

This was something signalled to new hires during one of the automatic induction programmes. Therefore it was understood that Ochre Inc. operated a devolved HRM system during FY14 where responsibilities were devolved or shared with LMs and also FLEs, though the levels of autonomy were reported as being more limited. This is consistent with Hales' (2005) finding that LMs had a greater number of responsibilities but their authority had not increased commensurately.

All 11 LMs acknowledged that they held HRM practice responsibilities.

"HR is delivered to the workforce, I think, through the LMs." Jeff – LM

The LMs in the study also provided examples of the HRM practices they had carried out/enacted, during FY14, as summarised in Table18.

Table 18 Reported LM Enactment during FY14

Intention of HRM Practice	HRM Practice	LMs Reported Using During FY14
FLE Performance Ensure FLEs are able to meet performance aims of Ochre Inc.	*Annual Performance Review (APR)*	11
	Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)	6
FLE Reward Ensure FLE pay is market relevant and rewards performance aims of Ochre Inc.	*Pay Review Boards (PRB)*	5
FLE Development Development of FLE's longer term potential.	*Talent Review Board (TRB)*	3

To understand how the reported HRM practices were enacted by LMs, the accounts of LMs, FLEs and the HRMBP were all examined, where applicable. Once how LMs enacted their HRM practice responsibilities was felt to be understood, this was compared with the known FLE performance outcomes for indications on how the

approach taken affected the discretionary activities of FLEs when pursuing their FLE performance targets.

How LMs used their discretionary enactment when enacting 'FLE performance', 'FLE reward' and 'FLE development' is now examined.

6.2 Discretionary Enactment of FLE Performance HRM Practices

The category of HRM practices relating to 'FLE performance' were those understood to have the intention of ensuring that FLEs were able to meet the performance aims of Ochre Inc. This was understood to involve identifying FLE development requirements then supporting them through training and/or development so they were able to meet the immediate performance requirements in their current position. This was described as the purpose of the APR. It was understood that if the FLE was still unable to meet the performance requirements, and all training and development avenues had been exhausted, the LM was expected to exert greater focus on the FLE to express the seriousness of the situation so the FLE adopted the desired competence, and if not the termination of the FLE's status as an FLE, following the appropriate processes would take place. This was described as the purpose of the PIP.

How LMs carried out discretionary enactment of each of these HRM practices will now be looked at in turn.

6.2.1 Discretionary Enactment of the Annual Performance Review

It was explained that the responsibility for initiating the APR sat with the FLE but once initiated it became a shared responsibility. It was understood that LMs had a large amount of discretion on how they could carry this out.

> *"Every team will be different in terms of how their managers manage those discussions……the system in the appraisal sense does not fully capture it 'cause it's often done by the manager that has a spreadsheet, black book, notebook, sheets of paper, memory or whatever…" Deborah – HRMBP*

This level of discretion was understood to have been encouraged by the HRMBP who described her comfort with the general approach being taken by LMs in tango function.

This is understood to be because the HRMBP appreciated that teams were different in composition and objectives.

> *"I know there's informal ways of managing them [FLEs]... which is down to the individual manager.....from a systems perspective, when I'm running a report and it says, So-and-so has not initiated a performance review……I do not get too concerned that it's not been initiated because I know that the discussions nine times out of ten will have been ongoing between the management team.... and there would have been something that they were capturing those discussions and those objectives with." Deborah – HRMBP*

This generally positive view of the way LMs were carrying out discretionary enactment was found from the accounts of those in the study.

> *"I did take everyone through the appraisal process in my team at… end of the fiscal year." Paul – LM*

In total seven of the LMs who reported that they had carried out the APR process ('Alan', 'Paul', 'Jeff', 'Terry', 'Jim', 'Keith' and 'Aidan') with enthusiasm and care, also had FLEs who described that their LM as part of implementing the APR process was highly supportive of their performance development.

> *"You know, he actually knows how to sell, and he gives me valuable input which, I do not get that much valuable input from people." Sid – FLE*

This view was shared by FLEs in the study regarding the way their LMs used their discretion for carrying out the APR with praise for the way the LM continued the focus on development throughout the year. This suggests that the support extended beyond the formal APR conversation, and involved making some FLEs feel confident and capable to achieve their aims as part of developing them.

> *"Keith empowered me and, and given me trust to do my job." Patrick – first LM*

These perspectives on these LMs were shared with the HRMBP who stated that in her view too these LMs were considered diligent and enthusiastic.

"... you know, and that ... from a positive performance management ... I think these guys generally do it quite well." Deborah – HRMBP

This was in contrast to reported concerns prior to FY14 within tango function about the consistency and quality of the application of the APR process.

"So we have a performance management process that runs from 1st of June to 31st of May.....Are we very good at doing it? No!" Deborah – HRMBP

While some LMs carried out their HRM practice responsibilities with diligence and enthusiasm, the view from many in the study is that this was not universally the approach within Ochre Inc., a view also shared by FLEs who viewed their LM as praiseworthy in the study, but felt that this use of discretion was not the norm.

"I mean the formal appraisal process Keith does. Not all managers do." Patrick – FLE

While not all LMs were as diligent and enthusiastic in the study as the seven understood to have been described therefore as carrying out their APR responsibility through earnest enactment, those doing so still accounted for over half of those in the study. The remaining four LMs were reported to have used their discretionary enactment to conform to exactly what the process required. They were described as carrying out the HRM practice professionally but, unlike those who have been classified as earnest enactment; this was not followed through as much throughout the year, based on the descriptions of the LM, their FLEs who were part of the study and the HRMBP.

Therefore this approach to discretion is described here as literal enactment. This suggests that while the use of discretion in enacting the HRM practice for APR from those in this study was inconsistent, seven of those in the study carried their enactment out in a diligent and enthusiastic way while the remaining four completed their responsibilities professionally if comparatively unenthusiastically.

6.2.2 Discretionary Enactment of the Performance Improvement Plan

Within Ochre Inc. it was reported that what constitutes 'performance' for an FLE was clearly failing to come close to achieving your sales target.

"The other stuff is the nice to have and it's the value add stuff, but essentially you've got a number to go and deliver." Deborah – HRMBP

When FLEs were unable to achieve their required levels of performance in Ochre Inc., it was reported that the LM was expected to initiate the Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). The responsibility for initiating this is understood to be with the LM who begins the process by conducting a series of documented meetings with the FLE, recording these on the 'dot.com', identifying and clarifying with the FLE the performance expected and steps to achieve this. If the FLE achieved the agreed performance level, the process is understood to then come to an end, but if the FLE failed to make the specified improvement the process became more formal. At this stage the HRMBP became involved and worked alongside the LM through the rest of the process, which was understood to include high levels of transparency and rights for the FLE to appeal, but would lead to termination if the level of performance agreed was not achieved by the FLE. Responsibility for making sure the process was followed correctly throughout is understood to have remained with the LM.

"So you would still, as a manager you are responsible because… if you end up terminating that employee and you've gone through the process, that is your decision to terminate. If we end up in a tribunal, you're the one on the stand, not me, it's your decision, you own it." Deborah – HRMBP

Within the study there are five LMs who are known to have used the PIP during FY14, one of them was using the HRM practice twice, to provide six examples of HRM discretionary enactment from the study. This allowed some more understanding to be added to this general view. One LM described the process as something that was completed as required but without enthusiasm and mindful of the limitations of the process.

"My, um, my perception is, and actually that perception necessarily has not really changed, is that he's a bit of a lazy bastard." Paul – LM

In so doing they are understood to be conforming exactly to what the process required and as soon as he felt the process allowed him to he ended the PIP.

"We sort of tick the boxes." Paul – LM

Therefore it is suggested this is an example of literal enactment. A second LM described applying the process more diligently, enthusiastic that it allowed them to achieve the aim of raising the capability in their team by removing a non-performing member of their team from the organisation. It was described by them as one of the many HRM practices that they used to deliberately change their team and make it more capable of producing value creation deals. Therefore the PIP was described by them as a tool for achieving change.

"Performance management, absolutely?!! Very useful." Aidan – LM

Because of this, the approach taken by the LM is suggested as an example of earnest enactment, reflecting the level of diligence and enthusiasm placed into using their discretion by this LM, something informed by the HRMBP.

"Absolutely confident in him, yeah." Deborah – HRMBP

However, this LM was the minority view as within the study the consensus that emerged from the LMs towards the PIP was a negative view of the HRM practice.

"So we've got a PIP process. But invariably, what you'll find is that s-some people are great. Some people love it. Some people… and then other people just do not want to go there with it, you know." Jim – LM

One of those LMs who had some concerns with the HRM practice explained it was because as well as being uncomfortable with the process itself he also had concerns with the way the PIP process was viewed by the FLEs within their team.

"The view…inside the sales team was as soon as you go on a formal PIP you're out." Alan – LM

Therefore to support the intention of the HRM practice to improve the performance of the FLE but overcome the failings in the 'official' process, he conducted his own research and instead developed his own.

"So I built my own framework from doing a bit of research,…..we, I built a sort of traffic light system of green, amber, red, and four sort of areas of competence that I felt were important for him to work on." Alan – LM

This was used by him on one of his FLEs (who is not in this study) and received the explicit agreement to do so by the HRMBP.

> "*I went to HR and said look I want to do this, but I do not want to take the formal approach, you know what other frameworks or methodologies have you got? None? Right, all we've got is our formal PIP, and even when I looked at that framework it was not appropriate." Alan – LM*

Therefore this was reportedly enacted by him with the involvement from the HRMBP.

> *"And we shared it with HR every four weeks." Alan – LM*

This was reported by the LM, and informed by the background interview with the HRMBP, as successfully resolving the FLE performance issue.

> *"He's seen as transformed himself with the people that he's working with. And nobody, you know very few people know he went through this." Alan – LM*

The LM also described this as part of an ongoing development process that is taken seriously regarding all FLEs and that this was just a small matter as part of the wider approach. The perception of competence of this LM was shared by the HRMBP when asked to provide an exemplar for developing employee's ability:

> *"Alan." Deborah – HRMBP*

This revised and adapted approach has since been adopted by tango function, again informed by the HRMBP during a background interview. This approach to discretionary enactment is therefore described here as creative enactment, since it was an example of the LM deliberately deviating from and altering the formal process that the HRM practice was meant to follow in order for the intention, i.e. the improvement of the FLE's performance, to be achieved, given the LM's appreciation of the context.

This was explained to have been conducted with transparency by the LM and involved the HRMBP throughout. The willingness of the HRMBP to allow this level of discretionary enactment is also worth noting as the flexibility on the part of both parties appears to have ensured that in this instance the HRM practice responsibility was still

met while the reported quality of the HRM practice enacted was met, while the process was improved.

In contrast to this positive example of the LM working collaboratively with the HRMBP to overcome perceived deficiencies in an HRM policy in order to ensure effective enactment of the HRM practice, another LM in the study reported a very different experience and had their discretionary enactment of their PIP HRM practice deliberately disrupted by their LM. The PIP that was initiated by them to address poor FLE performance within their team was ended when the LM's immediate superior intervened to move the FLE who was being taken through the PIP process to a different team, which was understood to have ended the process.

> *"Erm, the person [senior LM] is a friend of his [employee LM had on a PIP in FY14] and, er, protected him ….sort of moved across somewhere else." Arthur – LM*

The LM felt undermined by this and was convinced this happened because his direct superior was friends with the FLE. This was not the only example of a PIP being ended through the intervention of another stakeholder. Another example was shared by the HRMBP who explained during the second background interview that having recognised poor quality discretionary enactment, they had to intervene and end the PIP process.

These two instances are therefore described here as interrupted enactment, because through the deliberate actions of another Ochre Inc. stakeholder the LM initiated, but was unable to complete, their discretionary enactment. The differing reasons in the examples provided suggest that this can occur for reasons which can be argued as legitimate in supporting the intention of the HRM practice, the LM was not viewed as competent as they were expected to be, or not legitimate in supporting the intention of the HRM practice, such as the alleged favouritism outlined.

Finally, an LM in the study reported being forced by a senior manager to initiate the PIP HRM practice against an FLE. The LM reported that the senior manager wanted to make an example of the FLE and under threat of disciplinary action themselves, they carried out the instruction.

"I said …I'm not doing it, you know, just not having it. If you want to do that do it yourself but I'm not going to put him on a PIP." Arthur – LM

The LM reported that the FLE was placed on long-term absence before the PIP process could reach a conclusion and then left the organisation. This form of discretionary enactment was therefore described here as instructed enactment.

This made the PIP HRM practice the HRM practice in the study with the most widely reported differences in how the discretionary enactment was understood to have been used by LMs during FY14.

6.2.3 Discretionary Enactment of FLE Performance HRM Practices and Performance

The way that LMs are understood to have carried out their discretionary enactment of the HRM practices, which were understood as intended to influence FLE level performance outcomes, the APR and the PIP, were compared to the known performance outcomes of the FLEs of the LMs in the study. This is summarised in Table 19.

Table 19 LM Discretionary Enactment for FLE Performance by Individual FLE Performance Outcomes

LMs In Study		HRM Practice Discretionary Enactment for FLE Performance	
		Annual Performance Review (APR)	Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)
'Above Average' LMs	Michael	'Literal'	'Interrupted'
	Alan	'Earnest	'Creative'
	Paul	'Earnest'	'Literal'
	Jeff	'Earnest'	-
	James	'Literal'	-
	Terry	'Earnest'	-
'Below Average' LMs	Rita	'Literal'	-
	Jim	'Earnest'	-
	Keith	'Earnest'	-
	Aidan	'Earnest'	'Earnest'
	Arthur	'Literal'	'Interrupted' / 'Instructed'

This suggests four things related to LM discretionary enactment of the APR HRM practice. *Firstly* all LMs in the study are reported to have conducted the APR HRM practice, though a small minority of LMs within tango function are known not to have done so. Having been informed by FLEs and the HRMBP, there is confidence that this is an accurate finding. *Secondly*, earnest enactment was the more prevalent approach found to have been taken by the LMs in the study, as reported by them, their FLEs and the HRMBP. This was followed by 'literal' enactment which suggests that when carrying out their HRM practice using 'earnest' enactment, seven of the LMs applied greater enthusiasm and diligence, but literal enactment also suggests that the remaining four LMs followed the process as specified by the organisation. This would indicate LMs in the study applied discretionary compliance with the APR HRM practice, if not universal 'enthusiasm' for it. *Thirdly*, no evidence was found in the study of LMs not being interested in or sabotaging, through their discretionary enactment, the APR HRM practice. Instead what has emerged from the study is the suggestion that even those LMs classified as 'literal' were still found to be professional in how they understood and described their discretionary enactment of the APR HRM practice. When appreciated in concert with the separate finding that the majority of the LMs in the study expressed that they appreciate they hold responsibility for FLE development and that the APR HRM practice is part of meeting that responsibility, this suggests that LMs in the study are accepting of this HRM practice as a people management responsibility. *Fourthly* and finally, this study has found no discernible difference between LMs and the number of people in their team who achieved their individual FLE performance outcome, whether literal enactment or earnest enactment was used by their LM in the discretionary enactment of the APR HRM practice.

This suggests that while differences in LM discretionary enactment were found when carrying out the APR process, the differences between literal enactment and earnest enactment in isolation does not explain differences in FLE performance outcomes in this study.

This also suggests three things related to discretionary enactment of the PIP HRM practice. *Firstly*, this appears from the study to be a less prevalent HRM practice than the APR within the LMs in this study. As with the discretionary enactment of the APR

HRM practice, the corroboration of the HRMBP, with LM and FLE accounts, suggests that there can be some confidence that this is an accurate representation of what was carried out by those in the study during FY14. *Secondly*, there was a wide degree of approaches taken by LMs in this study in how they used their discretionary enactment of this HRM practice. This variation in approach is understood to be related to the broadly critical view the LMs in the study have towards this process, which is in contrast to the findings in the study that the LMs accept the responsibility for FLE performance. This suggests that where LMs are accepting of their HRM people management responsibilities but disagree with the credibility of the process, a wide variety of discretionary enactment styles is the outcome. *Thirdly* and finally, as with the APR HRM practice, there appears to be no evidence that LMs' discretionary enactment of the PIP HRM practice in isolation explains differences in FLE performance outcomes found in this study.

6.3 Discretionary Enactment of FLE Reward HRM Practices

'FLE reward' is understood to have the intentions, related to those in this study, of firstly making sure that Ochre Inc. was competitive in any employment market in which it operated, so it could attract the type of talent viewed by the HRM function as necessary for it to be successful, and secondly FLE incentives encouraged FLEs to carry out discretionary activity which would lead to Ochre Inc. achieving the organisational performance aims through FLEs achieving their individual performance targets.

Each of these will be examined in turn.

Regarding the first, LMs were expected to manage their shared responsibilities for 'FLE reward' through the HRM practice responsibility of involvement in the Pay Review Board (PRB). LMs held little authority for the setting of FLE pay and benefits, doing so through their input into the PRB. This was classed as 'shared responsibility' as it was understood they could input into the process in order to make a recommendation on the decision to be made, though the authority for making the decision on how an FLE would be paid was made by the PRB.

> *"Um pay is a tricky one um because any increase in pay goes all the way up to corporate to approve, um and you have to have a pretty compelling reason to*

give somebody a pay rise…. outside of a, an official focal budget." Deborah – HRMBP

Every year basic pay was reviewed by the PRB, the 'focal budget review', and any review separate to that required a very strong case if it were to have a chance of being authorised.

"And it's quite a limited budget at the same time. Um, you know, it's not outside of the realms of possibility but you have to have a very good reason for requesting something outside of, as an exception." Deborah – HRMBP

LMs were described as being able to use their discretion to request pay rises outside the annual 'focal' process, but these were reported as rarely approved. The consensus from the LMs, FLEs and the HRMBP was that this was an unpopular system, firstly because of the lack of scope for discretion. Seventeen out of the 23 FLEs interviewed cited discontent with pay levels, rewards and the review process.

"But because H ... err, you know, it's not HR, it's not ... you know, because the way Ochre Inc. is we just ... I cannot get them a pay increase, it's ridiculous." Michael – LM

Secondly the basic pay was reported as being uncompetitive, which was understood as demotivating for FLEs.

"I think payment increment, err incremental payments and, and getting um salary raises and things like that is horrendous, um for me would be the number one reason why I would leave Ochre, absolutely." Roger – FLE

In addition it was reported that FLEs were beginning to leave Ochre Inc. because competitors were offering larger basic salaries.

"He went on he went to 'Competitor Co' for extra money." Keith – LM

LMs reported that as well as leading to attrition of FLEs, it made recruiting those with the experience to be able to work successfully in a matrix team and understand the business problem that a value creation deal would resolve very difficult.

"You know, you ask anybody who when they was interviewing, leaving what the market value was and still is for people and we were significantly beneath it. Still are now. So when we recruited people in, into those brackets, we were actually recruiting average people." Arthur – LM

Therefore, regarding the first understood intention of 'FLE reward', of making sure Ochre Inc. was competitive in the employment market relevant for those in tango function during FY14, it is understood that there existed a gap between the espoused organisational rhetoric, that Ochre Inc. was competitive regarding basic pay, and what was perceived by the LMs and FLEs in the study. This view was not shared by the HRMBP, when the perceived gap was explored further during the second background interview.

"Yeah, our attrition was not high……. generally. There's a few pockets but we're … we probably run at about 10% which is pretty good." Deborah – HRMBP

Following this and reviewing LM accounts again, it is understood that while the overall numbers, the "10%", may be comparable with norms for the industry, the consensus from those in the study was that it was not the *volume* of attrition that was the concern from LMs, but the *quality*.

"Then this guy 'Jason Barclay', he was my megastar… new baby came along, been in Ochre Inc. seven years err, no pay rise, so he went over to 'Competitor Co' they paid him £30,000 a year more. His base salary went up by £30,000 quid!!" Keith – LM

Those leaving were understood to be those who were perceived as being the most experienced and capable of succeeding in a value creation environment. Therefore the understanding was of an HRM practice, the PRB, that offered shared responsibility but little authority and which was understood as poorly viewed by LMs and FLEs alike. This is understood to mean that there was a gap in perception between LMs and FLEs with that of the HRMBP, and 'corporate', regarding whether the intention of being competitive, an attractive employer, was achieved by Ochre Inc. The former are

understood to have thought this had not been achieved while the latter are understood to be more confident it had.

Within the study five LMs described being involved in the PRB process. Of these, three had their requests for pay rises rejected and two had their request approved. The form of approach found to have been taken by the three LMs who had their request rejected while carrying out the PRB HRM practice was understood to be literal enactment. This meant that the HRM practice was described as being carried out in a way that involved conforming exactly to the process required.

The two LMs both carried out a form of creative enactment whereby they deliberately deviated from the 'official' HRM practice because it was understood that they wanted to achieve the intention of the HRM practice, to make sure that Ochre Inc. was competitive regarding basic pay, but used their discretion to deviate from the formal PRB HRM practice process. One LM realised that a rule existed that provided an exception to the limitations on pay rises existed for FLEs who worked on accounts seen as having higher potential for value creation deals. In order to get their FLE, who was also in the study, a pay rise he had the FLE moved into a different role category by getting the designation of one of her accounts on her patch changed.

"Well the salary [went through] .....that part got done, yeah." Jeff – LM

This led to the pay increase, despite the lack of any change in her responsibilities, which was understood as sufficient to get her pay reward authorised by the PRB. The other LM who used creative enactment used a different way to deviate from the process. This LM explained that they found the restrictions on pay frustrating. When their first attempts to get pay rises authorised were rejected through the PRB process, they deviated from the process by encouraging their FLE to speak with a recruitment agent, recommended by the LM, who provided a job offer for the FLE. This was then used by the LM for evidence that they required their FLE to have the pay review previously requested authorised.

These uses of creative enactment are both examples understood as deliberately deviating from the HRM practice formal process because the LM was aiming to achieve

the intention of the HRM practice, competitive pay, and used creative enactment to achieve this.

Regarding the second intention, the 'FLE reward' was that FLE incentives encouraged FLEs to carry out discretionary activity, which would lead to Ochre Inc. achieving the organisational performance aims through FLEs achieving their individual performance targets. The experiences were more problematic. As outlined earlier, in Chapter 5.1, LMs and FLEs in the study reported challenges, as the incentive system used supported individual outcomes rather than matrix team outcomes. It is understood that through the PRB HRM practice, LMs had no meaningful way of influencing this approach which came from the US head office.

> *"Um again that's, that's not an LM's empowerment, that's something from corporate…..as a manager you have no influence." Deborah – HRMBP*

They were understood to have some discretion in how their overall team 'target' figure was distributed between their direct report team members, e.g. giving newer team members a smaller number and more experienced members a larger number, but they had no influence on the incentive being based on individual performance. Yet they were understood to have retained responsibility for making sure that the outcomes and intentions of 'FLE reward', which was FLE incentives, encouraged FLEs to use their discretion to achieve their individual performance targets, as shown by the 'competence framework' which records their responsibilities.

> *"Displays strong tenacity and drive to see things through to successful conclusion. Demonstrates a sense of urgency, a propensity for action, and confidence in the likely success of plans and initiatives. Delivers results that meet or exceed expectations. Secures commitment for change initiatives, and addresses any concerns. Makes sure that commitments to change initiatives are fulfilled, and adjusts to changing circumstances." Extract from LM competence framework*

This included having to deal with the reported tensions and conflicts that were reported to have arisen from the individual focused incentive system, reported in Chapter 5.4,

where seven of the 11 LMs and 15 of the 23 FLEs reported that this became tense and conflictual as value creation deals neared completion.

> *"But you will end up at near fist-fighting in the office at times. You're, you're dealing with serious amounts of money in people's back pockets." Jasper – FLE*

Therefore even though the incentive system is understood to have changed, LMs are understood to have retained responsibility for this aspect of the understood intention of 'FLE reward' and use their people management discretion to overcome any deficiencies.

> *"I would probably say nine times out of ten the stuff that the managers are doing they should be doing anyway." Deborah – HRMBP*

To find how LMs used their people management discretion to do this, their non-HRM practice discretionary interventions were reviewed again for any suggestion that LMs were using this discretion to overcome the lack of the discretion they had in the PRB HRM practice.

From this it is suggested that some overlaps existed in FY14 between the LMs' HRM 'FLE reward' responsibilities through the HRM PRB practice and the LMs' non-HRM discretionary practices already identified in Chapter 5. This is supported further by examining the competence framework that defined LM people management responsibilities and which state clearly that it was expected by Ochre Inc. to ensure the performance outcomes of the FLEs that LMs *"adjusts to changing circumstances"* (Ochre LM 'competence framework').

Reviewing the data again, it is viewed that it is reasonable to suggest that the identified groupings of discretionary practices *develops FLE ecosystem* and *provides FLE shielding* emerged as ways LMs used their people management discretion to "adapt" to the "changing circumstances" of cross functional working in pursuit of value creation deals with FLEs working in matrix teams.

> *"You know you've got to start thinking to do things slightly differently." Alan – LM*

Therefore it is reasonable to suggest that a number of the non-HRM discretionary practices understood to have been carried out by LMs during the study were being done to overcome some of these reported challenges with the 'FLE reward' bonus system, especially the reported failing of encouragement of the matrix team working, which was understood as necessary for success by those in the case study.

The LM non-HRM practice, people management discretionary practices, understood to be related to addressing these shortcomings in the 'FLE reward' HRM PRB practice are highlighted in Table 20.

Table 20 LM Non-HRM Discretionary Interventions to Address FLE Reward Failings

'People Management' Discretion	Interventions	Groupings of LM Practices	Understood to be Used to Overcome Described Failings of FLE Reward Incentive Scheme
Produces Team Contextualisation	Designing Directed Endeavour	Establishing aims, priorities and needs	x
	Designing Social Endeavour	Sets standards and expectations	x
		Defines required team dynamic	x
	Designing Capability for Endeavour	Defines team capability needed	x
		Incorporates considerations of FLE development	
Cultivates Team Environment	Influencing the Dynamic within the Group	Team building	
		Creating a 'safe' space	
		Encouraging team to problem solve	
	Influencing the Dynamic between LM and Individuals	Maintaining individual motivation	x
		Being available for FLEs	
		Relationships with FLEs	
	Influencing the Dynamic between LM and Overall Group	Building credibility	
		Protecting from external pressure	x
Shapes FLE Focus	Prioritisation Management	Setting priorities	
		Encouraging long-term thinking but pragmatic thinking	
	Focusing FLE Activity Management	Helping FLE time management	
		Monitoring FLE activity	x
Develops FLE Ecosystem	Providing Cross Functional Guidance	Helping manage customers in 'matrix team'	x
		Supporting FLEs' internal network building	x
		Guidance on 'matrix team' working	x
		Involving 'matrix team' members	x
Provides FLE Shielding	Shadowing Deals	Influencing LMs or other FLEs	x
		Protecting FLE allocations	x
	Influencing Upwards	'Sandbagging' information from senior managers to protect FLEs	x
		Relationship management between LM and direct superior	

This is presented as a finding from this study, showing that LM discretionary practices were understood to have been carried out to overcome perceived failings of the HRM system, in this case the HRM practice PRB 'FLE reward'. The other findings from this part of the study are the instances of *creative enactment* used by LMs using their discretionary enactment to deviate from the official process with the understood intentionality of doing so to achieve the intentions of the HRM practice they have responsibility for enacting.

6.4 Discretionary Enactment of FLE Talent Development

FLE talent development is understood to have the intention of developing the long-term development of an FLE. This was understood to be separate from 'FLE performance development' and intended to support the development of those FLEs who were viewed as having the potential to be developed beyond their existing role. This intention was achieved through the 'talent review board' (TRB). This HRM practice was reportedly introduced immediately prior to FY14.

> *"So I actually think the talent review process is driving more development discussions than the performance appraisals process." Deborah – HRMBP*

It was described as involving the ranking of the LM's direct FLEs using a 'nine box grid' where the horizontal axis ranked the FLE's current performance and the vertical the FLE's potential for development.

> *"So this all used to be done on, so within the performance management template you have a potential and a performance rating." Deborah – HRMBP*

Performance was understood to be a combination of the FLE's performance against their individual target and how it was perceived they were performing in selling products or services viewed important by the head of tango function, David Oswald, or any other determinant of performance that he or another senior manager used as their criteria.

> *"That's his [David Oswald] priority….., as I say, it's not massively scientific." Deborah – HRMBP*

This meant the LM, their direct superior and the HRMBP would meet quarterly and review the LM's team, what the LM had been doing to enhance their long-term development opportunities, ensure their retention and anything else that was deemed important. Therefore the TRB HRM practice responsibility for each LM in the study was participation in the full TRB process.

> *"So what happens is, I will have a talent review board with every one of [David's] directs and their management team where we'll rate that….so I will sit down with XXXXXX and his management team, um each of them will present their own team, and then all of that data filters up." Deborah – HRMBP*

During this process the LMs are understood to have been asked to explain quarterly how their team members are performing and what potential they have. Within each TRB there is then an in-depth conversation about how the LM will either deal with poor performers or support those with potential. At the end of each meeting a series of actions were agreed and revisited annually, or more frequently if the HRMBP or a senior manager deemed it necessary, to review progress and make further recommendations. As well as providing information, the TRB process was understood to have allowed the HRMBP and senior LMs to remind and reinforce the TRB HRM practice responsibilities that LMs held for FLE talent development and 'FLE performance development'. LMs were understood therefore to use their discretionary enactment for the TRB HRM practice to contribute to the information gathering aspect of the TRB process and follow through on agreed development objectives for their team.

> *"And we encourage managers after the review board to say, you know, go back to your FLE, tell them where they are in the grid, tell them what everybody in the room said about them, and give them that feedback, so that it is a really transparent process." Deborah – HRMBP*

This information was collated into an overall summary that each six months the head of tango function attended personally and chaired, and which involved the direct managers of the LMs in the study and the HRMBP.

> *"We'll set an agenda, so rather than David [Oswald, head of tango function] sitting there and talking about 300 people in his organisation, which is quite painful." Deborah – HRMBP*

The TRB process allowed visibility and scrutiny of how LMs were developing the FLE talent development of their direct team members.

> *"So it's very visible if people aren't moving around, because you can see where they were previously, um and as that starts to build up I think that again will start to give you a picture of, well why has not this person moved?" Deborah – HRMBP*

The TRB process and related TRB HRM practice responsibilities, were reportedly introduced to enhance FLE retention.

> *"Indicate the risk of loss from a flight risk perspective – low, medium and high, and also the impact of loss if they go. So this gives you kind of a health of your organisation from a, you know, if all of our top talent are… at high risk of loss and a high impact we know we've got a problem just from kind of the visual perspective." Deborah – HRMBP*

However, this contradicts another statement made by the HRMBP in the second background interview, reported in Chapter 6.3, which was that in Ochre Inc. during FY14, FLE retention in Ochre Inc. was *not* a concern so no action was needed to enhance it. Therefore it was understood that the main purpose of the TRB process was improved FLE talent development, though it was also understood that it was not clear if this was to improve FLE retention.

Unlike their APR HRM practice responsibility in Chapter 6.2.1, where all LMs declared using their discretionary enactment, for the TRB HRM practice only three of the 11 LMs in the study described knowledge of the process. Of these three the reported perceptions of their TRB HRM practice responsibility varied. Two were positive about the TRB process and their TRB HRM practice responsibility, appreciating that it complemented their APR HRM practice responsibility while adding a further and longer term dimension than the APR HRM practice could offer.

"So, you know, I, I think that the TRB process has become useful. And I think that when it first – I cannot remember how long, I'm not sure in fact when it happ- when it first came out - but when the 9 box grid and all that first came out you put people in the box, turn around and say, so what. Whereas now actually it's influencing how we manage the business, erm, it's influencing, you know, what you think about, erm, people's careers and capabilities and where they might want to go. So I think that erm, that's actually become a more useful tool than a performance review [the APR]." James – LM

While there was a lack of detail on how the other eight LMs used their discretion to carry out their TRB HRM practice responsibility, this was offset slightly by the background interviews with the HRMBP and the perspectives shared by the LMs' FLEs. This suggested that seven out of the 11 LMs in the study, the three who mentioned the TRB HRM practice and four others, are understood to have been perceived as using their people management discretion to be supportive of FLE talent development.

"He's [LM - Jeff] has been very good in terms of growth and development as well, for me." Janet – FLE

Therefore it is understood that seven of the 11 LMs were supportive of FLE talent development but only three LMs in the study offered any insight into how their TRB HRM practice discretionary enactment was carried out. Of these, two were understood to have carried out their discretionary enactment with diligence and enthusiasm, which has been taken as meaning that this was an example of earnest enactment. The remaining LM, however, was critical of the process.

"I'm not a big fan really." Terry – LM

The LM Terry, despite being negative about his TRB HRM practice responsibility, was understood to be very positive about using his people management discretion to support the development of the longer term potential of his FLEs.

"If you talk to David [Oswald, head of tango function] I probably have the highest ratio of people getting promoted to be sales managers and RDs of anyone in this building." Terry – LM

This claim was informed by the HRMBP during the second background interview.

> *"I did their TRBs and things. Terry is great, yeah. Bit of a rebel. Hated the process. Hated it. Wouldn't get involved at all. But, an exemplar really. Yeah." Deborah – HRMBP*

However, Terry felt the TRB HRM practice created too much process and was a distraction. Therefore his approach to meeting his FLE talent development TRB HRM practice responsibilities involved using his discretionary enactment in a way that deliberately deviated from the formal TRB HRM practice process to achieve the intention of FLE talent development. He did this by using creative enactment to create a tiered hierarchical structure within his team where he gave three of the FLEs the title of 'supervisor' and some responsibility for managing others within his team of direct FLEs. This was carried out with the knowledge and support of the HRMBP.

> *"He put in a place a kind of a team leader structure." Deborah – HRMBP*

This allowed these FLEs to develop their people management skills within an environment where he could coach and develop them. As a way of offering the 'supervisors' an 'incentive' beyond the chance to develop their managerial skills, he used the discretion he had for distributing his overall target among his team. He deliberately reduced the targets of the 'supervisors', adding the reduction to those they were 'supervising'.

> *"[As a result] two guys [from FY14] have moved into line management roles." Deborah – HRMBP*

Therefore it is understood that he used this as a way of achieving the intention of FLE talent development, using what is described here as creative enactment in recognition that this use of people management discretion is understood to have involved greater application than diligence or enthusiasm.

The TRB HRM practice was only referred to specifically by six FLEs who all described it in a negative way, with the criticism coalescing around the description of it as an arbitrary 'box tick' exercise that did not lead to any meaningful outcome.

"And nothing ever really seems to get done, and is that because you're meant to do it, sometimes they just seem like a bit of a tick-box exercise." Fiona – FLE

Some also described it as opaque in addition to being arbitrary.

"You do not see the output from the talent review boards you're asked to input into it, but you do not really, you do not see anything that comes out. Now I'm sure things do……but it's discreet in terms of what comes out." Colin – FLE

All these FLEs, though critical of the TRB process, are understood to have remained positive about their LM and how they used their discretion to support the FLEs' longer term development.

"I had a whole year of having quarterly one to ones with… to get to the point where, you know, he knew me, knew where I wanted to go and therefore if I pitched up for an interview was not unknown to him." Anoush – FLE

Taken overall, this suggests that this was a new process which was understood to be intended to create a more professional and focused approach to the way tango function undertook FLE talent development. But the implementation as a new HRM practice appeared to be problematic and confused.

"The performance appraisal side of, err of the house, I guess, I'm not, I did not get overly concerned with 'cause I think we're going to see a new, and it will all be part of that anyway and it will automatically all feed together, but I think this is the more powerful tool in terms of having development discussions. Or it will be. Eventually." Deborah – HRMBP

The results found within the study suggest that while the small number of LMs who described carrying out their TRB HRM practice responsibilities did so in ways described as either earnest enactment or creative enactment, the perception of the TRB HRM practice was not wholly positive. The most vocal critique was arguably the most committed to supporting the intentions it was understood to have of those who described how they used their discretionary enactment. Equally FLEs who shared their perception of the HRM TRB practice were negative towards it, though remained positive towards their LMs. Therefore this is presented as a finding which suggests that

LMs, when they are supportive of the intention but not necessarily the practice, still use their people management discretion to enact the practice. Even the most vocally critical may actually apply creative enactment if they agree with the intention behind the HRM practice. All of this suggests LMs are supportive of HRM practices through their discretionary enactment when they support the intentions behind it.

The intention behind the TRB HRM practice was not, however, always clear from the descriptions provided by the HRMBP, the LMs and the FLEs. While it was described as supporting FLE retention, this explanation altered over time. The methods used were openly 'unscientific' and the operationalisation made it unclear if the purpose was FLE talent development, a replacement for the APR HRM practice, or a way of creating oversight of LM people management discretion. Therefore a secondary finding is that when there is a lack of clarity behind the intention, the result is the implementation of an HRM practice that can produce vocal LM critiques, but this does not automatically mean that they are not diligently and enthusiastically carrying out earnest enactment, or even if appearing to deviate from the process, carrying out creative enactment, meaning that LM rhetoric should be viewed with caution as this study shows that it does not automatically mean that this reflects how they will conduct discretionary enactment.

6.5 Conclusion from People Management – Enactment of HRM Practices

This chapter presented the findings on five different ways LMs were found to have used their discretion to enact their HRM practices responsibilities, which are illustrated in Table 21.

Table 21 LM Discretionary Enactment by HRM Practice

Intention of HRM Practice	HRM Practice	Instances of LM Discretionary Enactment				
		Literal	Earnest	Creative	Interrupted	Instructed
FLE Performance Ensure FLEs are able to meet performance aims of Ochre Inc.	*Annual Performance Review (APR)*	4	7	-	-	-
	Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)	1	1	1	2	1
FLE Reward Ensure FLE pay is market relevant and rewards performance aims of Ochre Inc.	*Pay Review Boards (PRB)*	3	-	2	-	-
FLE Development Development of FLE's longer term potential.	*Talent Review Board (TRB)*	-	2	1	-	

These forms of discretionary enactment of HRM practices, based on an understanding of LM discretion, which has been informed by the HRMBP and FLEs' input explaining how LMs used their discretionary enactment when conducting the four HRM practices they had responsibilities for to meet intentions on 'FLE performance', 'FLE reward' and 'FLE development', was examined. In addition, the following were also found.

Firstly, all LMs were found to be accepting of their HRM practice responsibilities and no evidence was found of LMs in the study sabotaging HRM practice enactment, though some were unhappy with aspects of some HRM practices. Rather, of the examples of discretionary enactment found, earnest enactment was the most prevalent approach found to have been taken in the study.

Secondly, when an LM in the study was not enthused by an HRM practice it did not automatically translate into non-enactment of that HRM practice.

Thirdly, when LMs in the study were reportedly critical of an HRM practice but were understood to have agreed with the intention, a wide variation in discretionary enactment was found. Literal enactment or 'perfunctory enactment' (Purcell et al, 2003:39) examples in the study were understood as being professionally conducted.

Fourthly in the study there was no evidence that variation in how LMs carried out their discretionary enactment of an HRM practice in isolation explained differences in FLE performance outcomes found in the study. Whether LMs carried out their discretionary enactment as 'literal' or 'earnest', the way they carried it out in this study was less important than what they carried it out doing, specifically in this case this was supporting their FLEs in 'develops FLE ecosystem' and 'provides FLE shielding'. In the study, what LM discretionary practices are being used by LMs was as important as variation in discretionary enactment when explaining the effects HRM practices have on individual FLE outcomes. The focus and direction of the people management discretion already being applied by LMs within a given context would appear as significant in the HRM practice influencing FLE performance outcomes as the enthusiasm with which it is enacted, based on the findings in this study, meaning that LM rhetoric should be viewed with caution, as this study shows that it does not automatically mean that this reflects how they will conduct discretionary enactment.

Further, the study found no discernible difference between LMs who used literal enactment or earnest enactment and the number of people in their team who achieved their individual FLE performance outcome, while LMs using their discretionary enactment to deviate from the process was done in this study to support the intentions of the HRM practice the LMs had responsibility for enacting. This suggests that LM discretionary enactment needs to be understood in concert with LM discretionary practices when understanding individual FLE performance outcomes differences and how these relate to HRM practices.

Fifthly and finally, LM people management discretionary practices were found that are understood to have been influenced by perceived failings of the HRM system, specifically, failings in the incentive processes and HRM practices around value creation selling and matrix team working within a cross functional environment, meaning that in this study LM discretionary practices were found that were understood to have been carried out to overcome these perceived failings of HRM practices but while still supporting the understood intention they, or Ochre Inc., had.

All of this suggests LMs are supportive of HRM practices through their discretionary enactment when they support the intentions behind it.

6.6 LM People Management Discretionary Enactment of HRM Practices Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the findings on how LMs used their discretion to carry out the HRM practices they had responsibilities for during FY14. Five types of LM HRM practice discretionary enactment were identified, two of which involved influences from other stakeholders within Ochre Inc. The next chapter (Chapter 7) will involve the analysis and discussion of this chapter and the findings already presented in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

7 Analysis and Discussion

At the end of the literature review (Chapter 2), I outlined the knowledge and methodological gap I had found in the literature, from which the research question for the study was developed: How do LMs use their people management discretion to influence individual FLE performance outcomes? To help address this gap, while also addressing the gaps on how LMs implement and enact HRM practices alongside their other responsibilities for FLE performance, I proposed a sub research question: *How do LMs use their people management discretion when enacting HRM practices?* This chapter will now outline the analysis and discussion of the findings presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. In section 7.1, this will involve contribution to academic theory analysis and discussion of the study findings on the five people management non-HRM discretionary interventions identified against the extant literature. This will be followed with conclusions and a summary in service of the research questions this study has been conducted to address. Section 7.2 will see this process repeated for the LM discretionary enactment identified, which will be structured around known LM influences on HRM practice enactment and the Wright and Nishii (2013) model on LM influence on intended vs. enacted HRM practices. This too will be followed with conclusions and a summary in service of the research question this part of the study has been conducted to address. In section 7.3 a *techne* design proposition will be presented, which outlines the mechanisms understood to be triggered or invoked by LMs as they carried out their people management discretion and which help explain how these discretionary interventions led to influence on FLE discretionary activity and the performance outcomes these FLEs produced in FY14, the period examined in the study. The design proposition has pragmatic validity to the next steps required will also be outlined. Finally, in section 7.4 an overall chapter summary outlining the overall key findings of the study in service of the research questions in light of the extant literature will then be presented.

7.1 Academic Theory Related Analysis and Discussion on LM People Management Discretionary Interventions

Presented in Chapter 5.6 were the people management discretionary interventions, represented by groupings of LM discretionary practices, which are a summary of the findings on how the LMs in tango function within Ochre Inc. had used their people management discretion to influence the discretionary activity of the FLEs within their team that these FLEs used in pursuit of their individual performance outcomes.

These findings are presented again in Table 22.

Table 22 Summary of Non-HRM LM People Management Discretion

LM Non-HRM Discretionary Interventions	Groupings of Clusters	LM Discretionary Practice Clusters
Produces Team Contextualisation	Designing Directed Endeavour	Establishing aims, priorities and needs
	Designing Social Endeavour	Sets standards and expectations
		Defines required team dynamic
	Designing Capability for Endeavour	Defines team capability needed
		Incorporates considerations of FLE development
Cultivates Team Environment	Influencing the Dynamic within the Group	Team building
		Creating a 'safe' space
		Encouraging team to problem solve
	Influencing the Dynamic between LM and Individual FLEs	Maintaining individual motivation
		Being available for FLEs
		Relationships with FLEs
	Influencing the Dynamic between LM and Overall Group	Building credibility
		Protecting from external pressure
Shapes FLE Focus	Prioritisation Management	Setting priorities
		Encouraging long term thinking but pragmatic thinking
	Focusing FLE Activity Management	Helping FLE time management
		Monitoring FLE activity
Develops FLE Ecosystem	Providing Cross Functional Guidance	Helping manage customers in a matrix team
		Supporting FLEs' internal network building
		Guidance on 'matrix team' working
		Involving 'matrix team' members
Provides FLE Shielding	Shadowing Deals	Influencing LMs or other FLEs
		Protecting FLE allocations
	Influencing Upwards	'Sandbagging' (hiding) information from senior managers to protect FLEs
		Relationship management between LM and direct superior

Each grouping of discretionary practices will be analysed with regard to the related areas of the extant literature. Each will also be examined through the lens of AMO theory (outlined in detail in the literature review in 2.4.1.) to bring additional insight

into understanding how non-HRM discretionary practices are related to FLE discretionary activity, the identified LM discretionary practices found in the study and the extant literature.

Examining LM discretion through this lens is also an approach with precedence in the literature (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013). This study is different from Bos-Nehles et al.'s (2013) work in a number of ways. That study used AMO theory as part of a data gathering framework to compare populations of LMs' perceptions with those of directly related, but unable to be compared, FLEs. Here it is being used to examine existing findings gathered on non-HRM discretionary interventions developed from data gathered from LMs and their direct reporting FLEs, whose accounts have been able to be compared.

Therefore by examining the identified groupings' discretionary practices through the lens of AMO theory, an additional appreciation of how LM people management discretion is thought to be influencing FLEs is achieved. This allowed an additional and systematic way of making further comparisons between LM discretionary practices and the Ochre Inc. HRM system, and the HRM practices enacted by LMs in the study.

To do this the identified non-HRM people management discretionary practices were categorised based on how they were understood to have influenced the ability/motivations of FLEs in the study. This was done by carefully and methodically comparing, and categorising, the identified LM discretionary practices with the definitions of AMO theory using Purcell et al.'s (2003) and Paauwe et al.'s (2013) descriptions of ability, motivation and opportunity as a reference. These definitions were chosen since these interpretations of AMO theory have been specifically developed for the 'black box' literature and discourse.

From this, a simple matrix framework categorising the understood relationship between identified LM discretionary practices and how they are understood to have been likely to have influenced FLEs was formed. This was done using the following AMO theory definitions: (A) ability to do the job based on understood influence on the "skills, training or developmental support" (Paauwe et al., 2013); (M) motivation based on understood influence on "the motivation and commitment" of FLEs (Paauwe et al., 2013:4) so that they apply their discretion to carry out behaviours beneficial to the

organisation (Purcell et al., 2003); and (O) opportunity through "job design and processes that provide opportunities for the skilled and motivated workforce to positively affect organisational outcomes" (Paauwe et al., 2013:4). The understanding created by this will now be explained as the five groupings of LM discretionary practices found in the study understood to have been used by LMs in discharging their people management responsibilities are analysed and discussed in turn.

7.1.1 Produces Team Contextualisation – Analysis and Discussion

Produces team contextualisation is presented, again conceptually, in Figure 30.

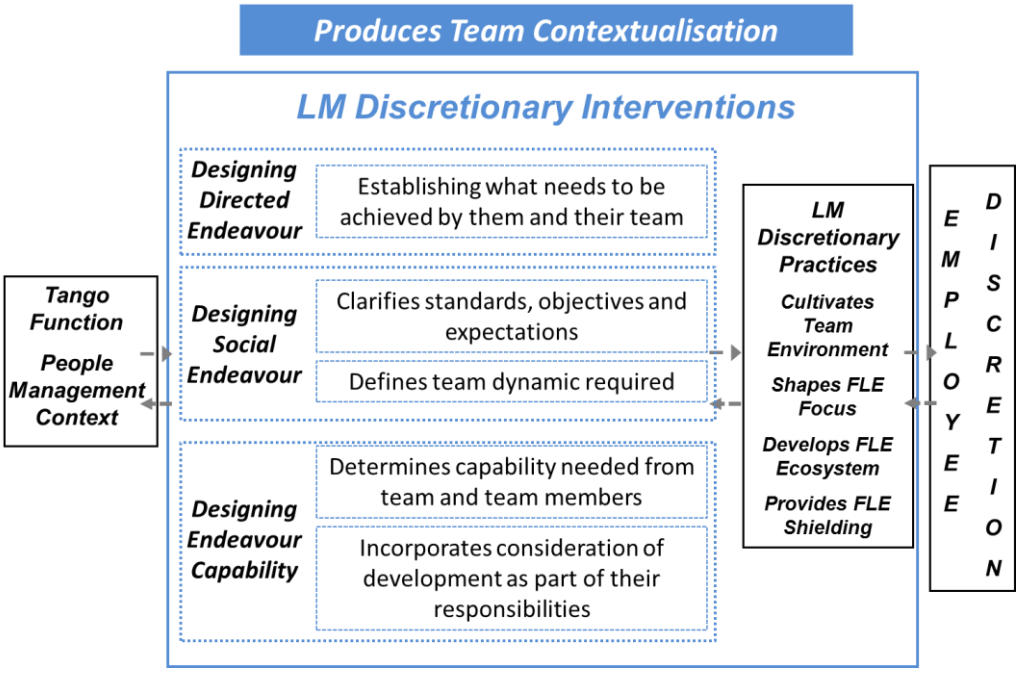

Figure 30 People Management Discretion – Produces Team Contextualisation

Truss (2001:1146) informs us that while LMs and their people management discretion may be a significant influence on FLEs and their performance outcomes, they do not influence FLEs in isolation, as other environmental factors will influence FLEs as well, such as HRM practices that exist in the workplace and for which LMs have little or no responsibility, other managers, and the culture and environment of the organisation in general. With regard to the influence this has on their people management responsibilities and subsequent discretionary practices when responding to these responsibilities, there was no consensus found in the literature on the degree of responsibility, accountability and authority devolved to LMs (Hales, 2005; Boxall &

Purcell, 2008; Brewster et al., 2013; Guest & Bos-Nehles, 2013; Heavey et al., 2013; Paauwe et al., 2013), nor how LMs established the people management priorities that they subsequently followed (Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Guest & Bos-Nehles, 2013). The findings from this study, presented as *produces team contextualisation* in Table 22 and Figure 30 illustrate the ways LMs use some of their discretion to take steps to understand the complexity that they have to work within from a people management perspective.

These findings echo Becker et al. (2005, 2009), reminding us that LMs of FLEs can be responsible for significant areas where organisations are not just generating revenue and profit but in the way they use their discretion to problem solve, apply innovation or generate impact on customers, are adding significant value to organisations. However, they add to the understanding in the literature in a number of ways, beginning with an examination of how they relate to AMO theory.

The identified LM people management discretion *produces team contextualisation* was examined through the lens of AMO theory (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Purcell et al., 2003; Paauwe et al., 2013) to understand how LM people management discretion influenced their FLEs in these areas.

Produces team contextualisation was understood to have increased the likelihood of FLEs using their discretion in ways that helped them navigate the challenges they faced adapting to cross functional and value creation selling. Both of these changes were accommodated in the discretionary choices made by LMs in how they would conduct the way that FLEs would determine viable customer value creation deals and then how to pursue them, providing enhanced FLE opportunities for successful use of their discretion (Paauwe et al., 2013:4).

Designing social endeavour was understood to have led to discretionary practices by LMs that would involve them in creating team conditions which would allow learning from them as the FLEs' LM through instruction, mentoring, coaching or authorisation of training activity, but also from FLEs instructing, coaching and mentoring each other. These were understood to help develop the skills and abilities necessary to succeed in the changing environment in tango function while simultaneously cultivating the motivation and commitment to make FLEs want to use their discretion in ways likely to

lead them to achieve their individual performance targets (Purcell et al., 2003; Paauwe et al., 2013:4).

Designing endeavour capability was understood to influence how LMs used their discretionary practices to help create the conditions and circumstances where the LM understood the development needs of the FLEs in the study, which were required for the FLEs to be able to have the skills and abilities needed for them to use their discretion in ways which would lead the FLEs to more likely successful performance outcomes in a cross functional environment selling value creation deals in matrix teams (Paauwe et al., 2013:4).

This understanding is summarised in Table 23.

Table 23 Produces Team Contextualisation and AMO Theory (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Purcell et al., 2003; Paauwe et al., 2013)

People Management LM Interventions	LM Discretionary Practice Groupings	LM Discretionary Practice Clusters	Relation to AMO Theory		
			A	M	O
Produces Team Contextualisation	Designing Directed Endeavour	Establishing aims, priorities and needs			x
	Designing Social Endeavour	Sets standards and expectations	x	x	
		Defines required team dynamic	x	x	
	Designing Capability for Endeavour	Defines team capability needed	x		
		Incorporates considerations of FLE development	x		

There was also evidence of a small minority of LMs using this people management discretionary intervention to develop longer term career ambitions as well. Combined, this suggests that in a people management context LMs in the study were using their discretionary practices to influence the abilities, motivations and opportunities available

to FLEs in addition to and separate from the enactment of HRM practices for which they held responsibility, when considering and planning how they would create and manage their teams.

Therefore, firstly, *produces team contextualisation* involved LMs in the study using their people management discretion to ascertain how they, as LMs, would need to use that discretion to influence, principally, the ability of the FLEs in their teams to have the "skills, training or developmental support" (Paauwe et al., 2013) needed for them to use their own discretion to achieve their individual performance outcomes. To a lesser degree the same holds for FLE motivation and opportunity. This suggests that LMs are taking allowance of or making consideration for their HRM responsibilities they have as part of their people management responsibilities, which is understood to have an influence on the way they carry out non-HRM discretionary practices and their non-HRM practice discretion. Secondly, the emergence of the discretionary practices that together comprised the discretionary intervention *produces team contextualisation*, included ways that LMs used their discretion to influence FLEs indirectly by adjusting how they themselves dealt with their immediate environment and altered their people management discretion as a consequence of this. Hales suggested over 90% of LMs are involved in implementing changes in the workplace (2005:485-487) and Boxall & Purcell (2008:218) are clear that LMs are more than "ciphers or simple conduits". But empirical examples of this in practice, where LMs accommodate changes in the workplace from a people management responsibility perspective, are rare, with Guest & Bos-Nehles (2013:95) arguing that it is a "seriously under-researched topic." The discretionary practices identified in the study, particularly when these are examined using an AMO theory perspective, provide examples of LMs making considered choices on the ways they use their discretion to interpret and adjust their approaches so they can meet their people management responsibilities differently from the ways the literature has so far found LMs of FLEs doing (McGovern et al., 1997; Hales, 2005; Wright & Nishii, 2013).

The LM people management discretion found in the discretionary intervention *produces team contextualisation* was arguably more considered and in depth than the expectations set by the literature and how it has depicted LMs of FLEs and the way they carry out

their people management discretion where they are typically described as "neither capable nor motivated" (Hope-Hailey et al., 1997:26; Hales, 2005; Khilji & Wang, 2006; Wright & Nishii, 2007). However, the literature has examined LMs' discretion through the lens of HRM practice enactment. By contrast, this study has examined how LMs used their non-HRM discretion interventions through the discretionary practices that were used, and in addition to that how they used their discretion for HRM practice enactment. This different approach is therefore likely to offer differing findings. The literature also led to an expectation for LM people management discretion to be of a supervisory style and manner, with little consideration for contextual matters as "no evidence has been found" that LMs of FLEs have shifted from "supervision to team leadership/co-ordination or business management" (Hales, 2005:496). Further, Purcell & Hutchinson (2007) found that it was the intervention of the research team and the HRM function which led to the LMs of FLEs in that study making changes to the ways they conducted their people management discretion in order to achieve FLE performance outcomes in ways more appropriate to their environment; however, this study found that LMs operated differently from these expectations.

The LMs in this study are understood to have experienced a number of changes in their environment, both operational, where value creation cross functional working and HRM related, which is understood to have resulted in FLEs needing different abilities because of the changes requiring them to work in matrix teams and to develop more business focus value creation deals. They are understood to have required help to maintain motivation and confidence to support how they carried out their discretionary activity during this period of reported transition. And FLEs are understood to have required help and support to be able use their discretion to achieve individual success, despite the HRM reward measures being reported as inhibiting their opportunities.

How LMs tackled both the operational changes and the HRM related aspects of their people management responsibilities is understood to have involved three groupings of associated discretionary practices. For the operational matters, they were found to use the grouping discretionary practices of *designing directed endeavour*. This provides some insight into the identified but unknown acts of discretion identified by Hales (2005). The discretionary practice *designing social endeavour* could be argued to

straddle both people management considerations with the operationally focused discretionary practice clarifying standards, objectives and expectations and the HRM focused defining team dynamic required, while the discretionary practice *designing capability for endeavour* was arguably comprised of discretionary practices intended to meet the HRM part of their people management responsibilities. However, in practice, each of the three identified LM discretionary interventions was understood to have been normal LM practice connected with the ways they sought to influence the performance outcomes of their FLEs. Differences in how this was done existed; for example, those who carried this out as if their team were their own business and who prioritised individual success over team success were more those LMs among the above average group. But overall, the approach of examining the context in the ways found was commonplace among the LMs in the study.

Therefore, LMs using their people management discretion in the ways described was, to a greater extent and in more depth, on operational and HRM matters than expected (Truss, 2001; Hope-Hailey et al., 2005; Khilji & Wang, 2006). In 2005, Hales described this type of activity as unusual and rare, stating that only "in a limited number of instances, aspects of business management have been grafted on to supervision" (Hales, 2005:496). Further Hales stated "in most organisations, business management and broader HR responsibility continue to rest with middle managers and/or HR specialists" (2005:496), while it was found that a "higher proportion of strategic managers" report involvement in HR activities than first-line managers" (Watson et al., 2007:45). While it is possible that Ochre Inc. is one of those rare cases, it is also possible that the continued increase in LM responsibilities predicted in the intervening time since this study has led to LMs of FLEs beginning to use their people management discretion in a more business management way than previously found in the literature.

However in this study, the finding *produces team contextualisation* was understood to suggest LMs were operating in a more business management style than the literature suggests, and were incorporating into their considerations HRM related matters alongside operational matters, something not seen previously in the literature. This supports the contention of Hales (2005) that LM responsibilities have been growing over time, as he found the achievement of FLE performance outcomes remains the core

LM responsibility, but that they also hold responsibilities for budgeting, forecasting and HRM practices.

This also supports Truss' (2001:1146) contention that "the informal organization has a key role to play in the HRM process, such that informal practices and norms of behaviour interact with formal HR policies" and that, as this study suggests, an example of the "agency" referred to by Truss (2001:1146) which "needs to be considered" is *produces team contextualisation*. Further, this study suggests that as a consequence of the added responsibilities, the way some LMs are using their "agency" or discretion, such as those in the study, are doing so in a more business management than supervisory approach than previously found (Harris et al., 2002; Gratton & Truss, 2003; Purcell et al., 2003; Hales, 2005; Maxwell & Farquharson, 2007; Becker et al., 2009). This also therefore supports the view of an increasing ambiguity between the people management responsibilities of some FLMs and middle managers (McConville & Holden, 1999; Currie & Procter, 2001; Maxwell & Farquharson, 2007; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Hutchinson & Purcell, 2010).

7.1.2 Cultivates Team Environment – Analysis and Discussion

Cultivates team environment was comprised of three discretionary interventions, illustrated in the model in Figure 31.

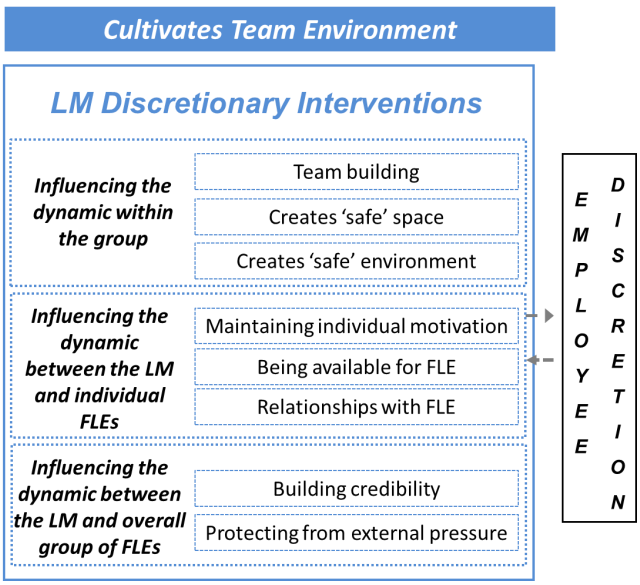

Figure 31 People Management Discretion – Cultivates Team Environment

Cultivates team environment matches the description of the discretionary practices that Purcell & Hutchinson (2007:3) describe as people management "leadership behaviours, which aim to influence employee attitudes and behaviour." These are described by Purcell & Hutchinson (2007:3) as "symbiotic" with LM discretionary enactment of HRM practices through the relationship between LM discretionary practices, such as those found in *cultivates team environment*, and the perception FLEs have of HRM practices and levels of employee engagement (Alfes et al., 2013b). Therefore the findings for *cultivates team environment* are not only of operational significance in how LMs organise their teams, but of importance to the understanding of how LMs influence FLEs within a people management context because of the influence this is understood to have on HRM practice enactment (Purcell et al., 2003; Alfes et al., 2013b; Guest & Bos-Nehles, 2013).

The discretionary practices of *cultivates team environment* were examined through the lens of AMO theory (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Purcell et al., 2003; Paauwe et al., 2013) to better understand how LMs were influencing their FLEs through the discretionary practices found in this discretionary intervention. From this it was understood that the LM people management discretionary intervention *cultivates team environment* increased the likelihood of FLEs being able to use their own discretion to better adjust to the challenges they faced in adapting to cross functional and value creation selling. This was because the creation of an environment that allowed FLEs to openly explore how they needed to operate is understood to have allowed them to have greater confidence to benefit from their LM helping them, but also from other team members.

The discretionary practices of *influencing the dynamic within the group* for example, were understood to have enhanced team cohesion in a way that allowed knowledge transfer and mutual development to take place between FLEs within the team. This is understood to have aided FLEs in the development of skills and abilities needed by them to be more likely to succeed. In addition to this it is understood to have helped provide confidence and therefore, it is believed, motivation for FLEs to apply their discretion in order to succeed. In some teams it was also understood that problem solving took place within the teams as a result of LMs using discretionary practices to encourage this and increase likely opportunities for FLEs. Based on the descriptions of

AMO theory by Paauwe et al. (2013:4), LM discretionary practices for *influencing the dynamic within the group* are therefore understood to have been likely to influence FLE ability, motivation and opportunity.

The discretionary practices of *influencing the dynamic between the LM and individuals* in the team were understood to have been comprised of discretionary practices which helped maintain FLE motivation through the establishment of credibility of the LM from the perspective of their FLEs, and also helping FLEs find opportunities to be successful through the LM helping them identify ways to be more successful in how the FLEs used their own discretion. Therefore taking Paauwe et al.'s (2013:4) description of AMO theory, it is understood that the discretionary practices of influencing the dynamic between the LM and individuals in the team are likely to have mainly influenced the motivation of FLEs, enhanced their opportunity for being successful and, in some cases, increased FLE ability.

The discretionary practices of *influencing the dynamic between the LM and the overall group* were understood to have enhanced FLE levels of motivation, again including increases in FLE confidence and therefore FLE willingness, to apply their discretion in ways advantageous to achieving a successful individual outcome. Again, taking the descriptions of AMO theory by Paauwe et al. (2013:4) as a way of examining these findings, it is suggested that LMs are likely to have influenced FLE motivation and opportunity through their use of these discretionary practices.

All of this suggests that in a people management context LMs are using their discretion to influence the abilities, motivations and opportunities available to FLEs through their discretionary practices in addition to the enactment of HRM practices for which they have responsibilities when considering and planning how they would create and manage their teams.

This is summarised in Table 24.

Table 24 Cultivates Team Environment and AMO Theory (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Purcell et al., 2003; Paauwe et al., 2013)

LM Discretionary Interventions	Groupings of LM Discretionary Practices	LM Discretionary Practice Clusters	Relation to AMO Theory		
			A	M	O
Cultivates Team Environment	Influencing the Dynamic within the Group	Team building	x	x	x
		Creating a 'safe' space		x	x
		Encouraging team to problem solve	x	x	x
	Influencing the Dynamic between LM and Individuals	Maintaining individual motivation		x	
		Being available for FLEs		x	x
		Relationships with FLEs		x	x
	Influencing the Dynamic between LM and Overall Group	Building credibility		x	
		Protecting from external pressure		x	

These findings help add to the understanding of the "leadership behaviours" (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007:3) which LMs exhibit and which Alfes et al. (2013a,b) describe as important in influencing FLE discretionary behaviour. Increasingly, Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) is becoming used as a way of measuring types of discretionary practices that were found in *cultivates team environment* (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007). LMX theory revolves around the two-way, dyadic, relationship between a leader and a follower (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), in this case the LM and the FLE, and the subsequent dynamic between them, as illustrated in Figure 32 – Wright & Nishii's (2013) 'dyadic model' of LM and FLE dynamic interaction.

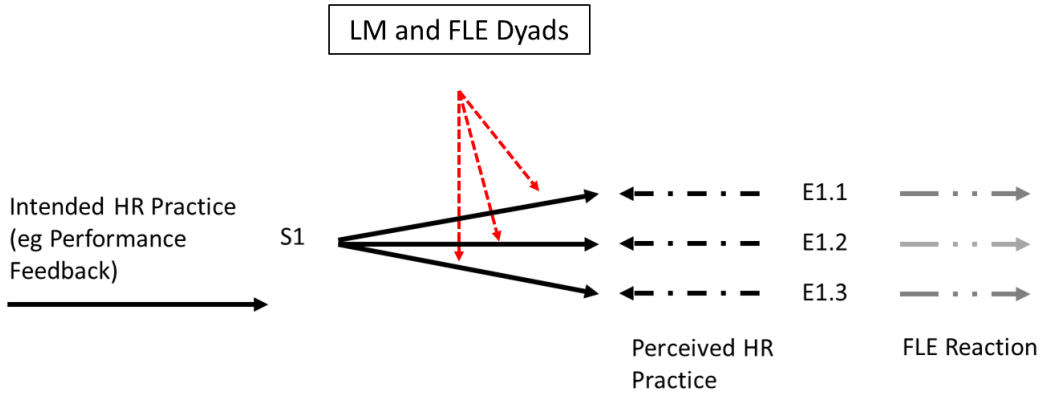

Figure 32 Dyadic Model of LM and FLE (Wright & Nishii, 2013)

The dynamic within the team is categorised separately by Graen & Uhl-Bien (1995:226). LMX theory is well known and has a 7 point scale (Graen & Uhl-Bien 1995:237), presented in summary in Table 25.

Table 25 LMX Theory 7 Point Measures of the LM/FLE Dyad (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995:237)

LMX Theory 7 Point Measure on LM and FLE Dyad (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995:237)
1. Do you know where you stand with your leader and do you usually know how satisfied your leader is with what you do?
2. How well does your leader (follower) understand your job problems and needs?
3. How well does your leader (follower) recognize your potential?
4. Regardless of how much formal authority your leader has built into his or her position, what are the chances that your leader would use his or her power to help you solve problems in your work?
5. Again, regardless of the amount of formal authority your leader (follower) has, what are the chances that he or she would "bail you out" at his or her expense?
6. I have enough confidence in my leader (follower) that I would defend and justify his or her decision if he or she were not present to do so.
7. How would you characterize your working relationship with your leader (follower)?

The LM and FLE dyad dynamic aspect of LMX theory for determining the nature of the dynamic between an LM and their FLEs is becoming more commonplace in research into employee perception of LMs in the context of HRM practice enactment (Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Sanders et al., 2010; Alfes et al., 2013a). This is because it is viewed as providing a robust and consistent way of accessing the "reciprocity" between LMs and FLEs (Alfes et al., 2013b:854). Taking an LMX theory view (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), some of the discretionary practices within this study can also be compared with the 7 point measures of the dyadic LM and FLE relationship aspect of LMX theory (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995:237) used by Alfes et al. (2013b), specifically the discretionary practice groupings *influencing the dynamic between LM and individuals* and *influencing the dynamic between the LM and the overall group*. The five discretionary practices within these groupings can be related to the LMX theory 7 point scale in this way, but in practice they are not an exact match and much of the nuance important for understating the meaning of the intention of the practice gleaned from LMs and FLEs within the

context of tango function is at best diluted or at worst lost. This is illustrated in Table 26.

Table 26 LMX Theory 7 Point Measure on LM and FLE Dyad (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995:237)

LM Interventions	Grouped LM Practices	LM Practice Clusters	LMX Theory 7 Point Measure on LM and FLE Dyad
Cultivates Team Environment	Influencing the Dynamic within the Group	Team building	N/A
		Creating a 'safe' space	N/A
		Encouraging team to problem solve	N/A
	Influencing the Dynamic between LM and Individuals	Maintaining individual motivation	Potentially 1 or 2 or 3
		Being Available for FLEs	Potentially 2 or 4, or 5 or 6
		Relationships with FLEs	Specifically 7 and potentially 1 or 3 or 6
	Influencing the Dynamic between LM and Overall Group	Building credibility	Close to 6 and potentially 2 or 4 or 5
		Protecting from external pressure	Potentially 2 or 4 or 5

This shows that only two of the seven items in the LMX Theory 7 Point Measure on LM and FLE Dyad (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995:237) are closely related to the discretionary practices found in this study. For example, the significance of the discretionary practice of *protecting from external pressure*, which more above average LMs did than below average LMs, could be categorised using the LMX 7 point scale (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995:237) as 2, 4 or 5.

However, knowing that within the context in tango function this discretionary practice is understood to have helped FLE motivation through enhancing their confidence, the LMX 7 point scale is unable to add to that understanding. While this might be problematic were this solely from helping further understand the LM discretionary practices from an operational and non-HRM perspective, because the people management discretionary practices found in this study when examined from an AMO theory lens are understood to have influenced FLE ability, motivation and opportunity, it is instead suggested that these differences with the 7 point scale of LMX theory as a measure of LM and FLE Dyad (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995:237) are significant. This is because this study suggests the way LMs are operating is influencing FLEs' ability, motivation and opportunity in addition to the way LMs are carrying out the HRM practices for which they have responsibility.

Further, this could also be taken to suggest, more generally for the literature, that LMX theory is useful but requires further data within any given study to augment the relatively limited insight the existing 7 point scale offers for use in a people management context.

Finally, the 'black box' literature appears focused on the LM and FLE dyad alone as the key interface of the enactment; the importance of the LM using their discretionary practice for *influencing the dynamic within the group* appears to be overlooked when examining LMs and FLEs from a people management perspective. This study found that as well as the LM being understood to be influencing the ability, motivation and opportunity of FLEs through non-HRM related discretionary practices, the FLEs in the study were also being actively encouraged by some LMs to influence the ability, motivation and opportunity of each other.

Therefore LMX theory is suggested to have some utility within the literature, and is growing in usage (Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Sanders et al., 2010; Alfes et al., 2013a) following the introduction by Purcell & Hutchinson (2007:16); however, the approach was found in this study to miss important nuances within given contexts and omitted the importance of actively encouraged FLE to FLE influence in an AMO theory context.

Therefore as well as *cultivates team environment* matching the description of the discretionary practices that Purcell & Hutchinson (2007:3) describe as people management "leadership behaviours", the influence on "employee attitudes and behaviour" extends beyond attitudinal influence. This is understood to be because the literature focuses on HRM practice enactment, while this study has found that the discretionary practices of *cultivates team environment*, while ostensibly operational, are also understood to be examining them through an AMO theoretical perspective, to be influencing FLE ability, motivation and opportunity. Further, this study suggests that LMX theory alone, as the measure of the LM acting upon the FLE, provides a very general view of what is a complex interaction, but fails to measure other influences on FLE discretion that are understood to have an influence, such as *influencing the dynamic within the group*, or the other discretionary interventions described elsewhere in this thesis.

7.1.3 Shapes FLE Focus – Analysis and Discussion

How LMs use their discretion to direct and manage the operational activities, those activities involved in actually completing tasks that lead to performance outcomes, of FLEs in a people management context, is an area where there has been little research (Purcell et al., 2003; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Harney & Jordan, 2008; Boxall, 2013; Paauwe et al., 2013; Harley, 2015; Boxall et al., 2016). This is because these discretionary LM practices are understood from the literature to be viewed as not HRM related beyond the influence they have on FLE attitudes and behaviours in a general sense (McGovern et al., 1997; Renwick, 2003; Hope-Hailey et al., 2005; Nehles et al., 2006; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Wright & Nishii, 2007; Alfes et al., 2013b; Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Farndale & Kelliher, 2013). Therefore *shapes FLE focus*, which outlined how LMs are understood to have influenced individual FLE discretionary activity during FY14, is an area which is understood as addressing an important gap in the literature where studies have focused on LM discretionary management of FLE discretionary activity in the realm of HRM practice enactment (Harney & Jordan, 2008), used general terms to describe LM discretionary activity when influencing FLE discretionary activity (Purcell et al., 2003; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007) or have indicators of LM style (Alfes et al., 2013a; Farndale & Kelliher, 2013). The discretionary intervention *shapes FLE focus* was understood to be comprised of two discretionary interventions which are grouped as *prioritisation management* and *focusing FLE activity management*. These are illustrated conceptually in Figure 33.

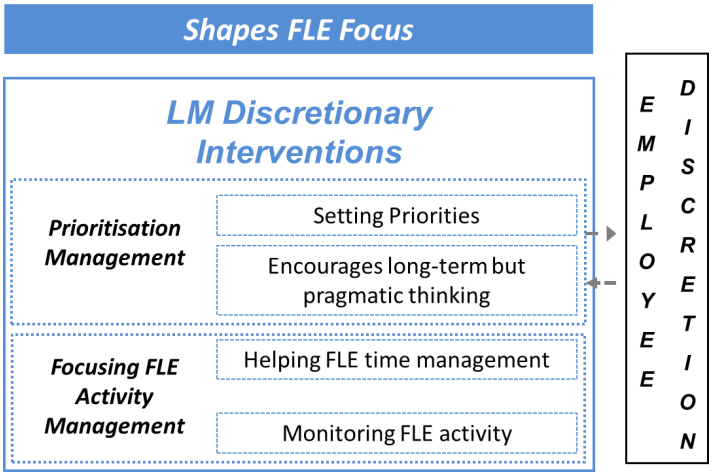

Figure 33 People Management Discretion – Shapes FLE Focus

The discretionary practices of *shapes FLE focus* were examined through the lens of AMO theory (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Purcell et al., 2003; Paauwe et al., 2013) to better understand how LMs were influencing their FLEs' discretionary activity through the discretionary practices found to be used by LMs carrying out this discretionary intervention. From this it was understood that the LM people management discretionary intervention *shapes FLE focus* increased the likelihood of FLEs using their discretion in ways that helped carrying out the FLE discretionary activities identified in the study when dealing with the challenges faced in adapting to cross functional and value creation selling when attempting to *generate opportunities* and then *closing the deal*.

The first discretionary practice, *prioritisation management*, was understood to be comprised of discretionary practices that helped FLEs make better decisions on suitable opportunities for success, conducted in ways that helped the FLE learn this as a skill while completing the task aspect of the FLE discretionary activity. Therefore, as well as directing the way the FLE used their discretion to carry out this task, the LM was understood to be deliberately enhancing their abilities to use their own discretion to continue to carry out this task without the LMs' repeated involvement. By examining the discretionary practices through the lens of AMO theory (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Purcell et al., 2003; Paauwe et al., 2013) it is understood that as well as helping the FLE carry out discretionary tasks necessary for them to achieve their individual targets for FY14, the LMs were also enhancing FLEs' understanding of how to do this within the context in which the FLEs were operating. Therefore it is suggested that the discretionary practices used by LMs could also have enhanced FLEs' abilities to use their own discretion effectively in this area. Consequently, it is also understood to have been likely to increase the opportunities FLEs had for being able to use their discretion to achieve their targets during FY14.

The second discretionary practice of *focusing FLE activity management* was understood to comprise discretionary practices that helped FLEs use their discretion to make better decisions on suitable value creation deals. Once made, FLEs were understood to therefore be better placed to apply their discretion in ways that improved the likelihood of their individual performance outcomes being achieved. Taking Paauwe et al.'s (2013:4) description of AMO theory again, this is understood to be an example of the

LM using their discretion to upskill FLEs, enhancing their ability, while also guiding their discretionary efforts and increasing their potential for the opportunity of achieving a successful outcome (Paauwe et al., 2013:4).

This therefore suggests that in a people management context, LMs in tango function were using their discretion to influence the abilities and opportunities available to FLEs through the discretionary practices they used when directing FLE discretionary activity.

This is illustrated/summarised in Table 27.

Table 27 Shapes FLE Focus and AMO Theory (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Purcell et al., 2003; Paauwe et al., 2013)

LM Discretionary Interventions	Groupings of LM Discretionary Practices	LM Discretionary Practice Clusters	Relation to AMO Theory		
			A	M	O
Shapes FLE Focus	Prioritisation Management	Setting priorities			X
		Encouraging FLE long-term but pragmatic thinking	X		X
	Focusing FLE Activity Management	Helping FLE time management	X		X
		Monitoring FLE activity			X

This suggested relationship between the LM discretionary practices found in the study and AMO theory illustrates that LM discretion is understood to be influencing FLEs' ability and opportunity. This suggests that an overlap may exist between LM discretion and the material development of ability and opportunity of FLEs, as also found in *cultivating team environment.* Further, it is understood from the study that changes within tango function and Ochre Inc. placed LMs and FLEs in a situation where they were left to use their discretion to overcome identified gaps in the HRM practices for reward and development gaps in FLE skills for value creation selling in a matrix team environment.

Therefore, while directing the discretionary activities of FLEs in the study, it is understood that as well as a linkage to AMO theory, LMs were, at a practical level, using their "leadership behaviours" (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007:4), while directing the

discretionary activity of their FLEs to 'problem solve' matters for the benefit of their FLEs, were also providing an example of people management LM discretionary practices which are typically associated in the literature as operational and not HRM related (McGovern et al., 1997; Renwick, 2003; Hope-Hailey et al., 2005; Nehles et al., 2006; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Wright & Nishii, 2007; Alfes et al., 2013b; Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Farndale & Kelliher, 2013).

7.1.4 Develops FLE Ecosystem – Analysis and Discussion

Truss (2001:1146) called for a disaggregated view of understanding FLE performance by comparing and contrasting at various levels in order to work within the complexities of organisations, a call echoed by Purcell et al. (2003), Purcell & Hutchinson (2007), Guest & Bos-Nehles (2013), Paauwe et al. (2013), Harley (2015) and Boxall et al. (2016). In service of the research problem and research question, this study has in a number of ways responded to this call by exploring the way LMs and FLEs interact within a connecting dyad, how each has used their discretion, and to use this to explain how known FLE performance outcomes were achieved from multiple perspectives and taking consideration of the contextual factors influencing how those actors in the study, LMs and FLEs, operate.

This finding, *develops FLE ecosystem*, emerged as a discretionary intervention understood to be LMs using discretionary practices to influence the FLEs in their teams in how they used their own discretion in a matrix team environment when taking a cross functional approach to sell value creation deals to customers. This is illustrated conceptually in Figure 34.

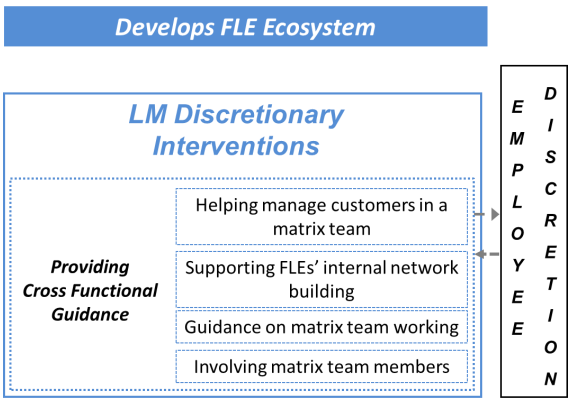

Figure 34 People Management Discretion – Develops FLE Ecosystem

The identified LM people management discretionary intervention *develops FLE ecosystem* was examined through the lens of AMO theory (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Purcell et al., 2003; Paauwe et al., 2013) to understand how LMs' people management discretion influenced their FLEs in these areas.

Providing cross functional guidance was found to involve LMs' discretionary practices mostly, reportedly using a coaching style when using their discretion in this way so that they educated and coached their FLEs; therefore, as well as guiding FLE discretion, the LMs also raised FLE capability to function effectively using their own discretion within what was widely reported by those in the study as a relatively new contextual landscape. This was understood to mean that as well as increasing opportunity through guiding FLEs on both where to apply their own discretion and how to apply it, LMs were also tutoring the FLEs so that when not under the direction or guidance of the LM they could remain effective in how they used their own discretion. This was therefore understood as leading to an increase in the LMs' FLEs' abilities.

It was also understood to support the FLEs' motivation through increased confidence and self-belief. With greater confidence and self-belief it is understood that FLEs were more likely to have the confidence to develop relationships with others within Ochre Inc. as well as the stakeholders within their customers, each of whom, prior to FY14, was often unknown to the FLEs. This is understood to then make them more capable, through knowledge, ability, confidence and motivation, to be more likely to successfully identify and develop opportunities and convert these into the value creation deals described as being won by those FLEs in the study who were successful.

All of this suggests that in a people management context, LMs in the study used their discretion to influence the abilities, motivations and opportunities (Paauwe et al., 2013) available to FLEs through their non-HRM discretionary practices in addition to the enactment of the HRM practices for which they had responsibilities.

This is summarised in Table 28.

Table 28 Develops FLE Ecosystem and AMO Theory (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Purcell et al., 2003; Paauwe et al., 2013)

LM Discretionary Interventions	Groupings of LM Discretionary Practices	LM Discretionary Practice Clusters	Relation to AMO Theory		
			A	M	O
Develops FLE Ecosystem	Providing Cross Functional Guidance	Helping manage customers in 'matrix team'	x	x	x
		Supporting FLE's internal network building	x	x	x
		Guidance on 'matrix team' working	x	x	x
		Involving 'matrix team' members	x	x	x

In addition to developing their own FLEs during *develops FLE ecosystem*, some of the LMs in the study, typically those of above average teams, also used their discretion through *involving other matrix team members*, to develop not only the ability, motivation and opportunity of their direct FLE team members, but also deliberately choosing to use their people management discretion to influence the FLEs of other LMs, by involving those FLEs who were connected to their own FLEs through matrix team membership.

Therefore this suggests that, as in *cultivates team environment* above, the dyad of LM and FLE is not the sole dynamic which influences FLE attitudes, behaviours, ability, motivation and opportunities of FLEs (McGovern et al., 1997; Hope-Hailey et al., 2005; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Guest & Bos-Nehles, 2013; Wright & Nishii, 2013). In that example, *develops FLE ecosystem* demonstrated LMs influencing FLEs in HRM related ways when an AMO theory (Paauwe et al., 2013) is used through their non-HRM discretion as already described; but, in addition, there is also influence on other FLEs in Ochre Inc., some of whom may be within tango function, but because cross functional involves those from other functions, this means they are likely to be influencing other FLEs from other functions as well, as illustrated conceptually in Figure 35.

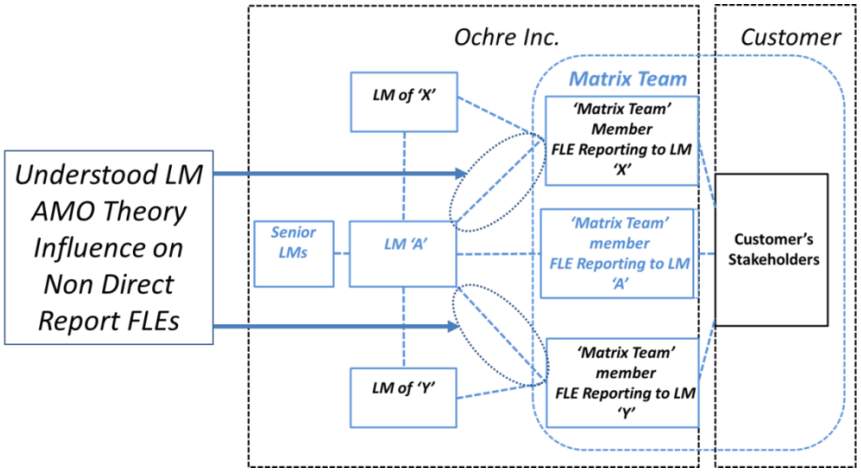

Figure 35 LM AMO Theory Influence on Non Direct Report FLEs

Therefore this suggests that LMs in the study were understood to be deliberately "influencing the attitudes and behaviours" through their "leadership behaviours" (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2003:4), the discretionary activity of FLEs in other teams. Wright & Nishii (2013:102) argue that FLEs react "in some way, based on the perceived HR practices"; however, FLEs in this study were found to operate to a model more akin to that outlined in Figure 36, where LMs were in a position to influence FLEs not within their teams, and by the same rationale have the FLEs in their teams influenced by other LMs.

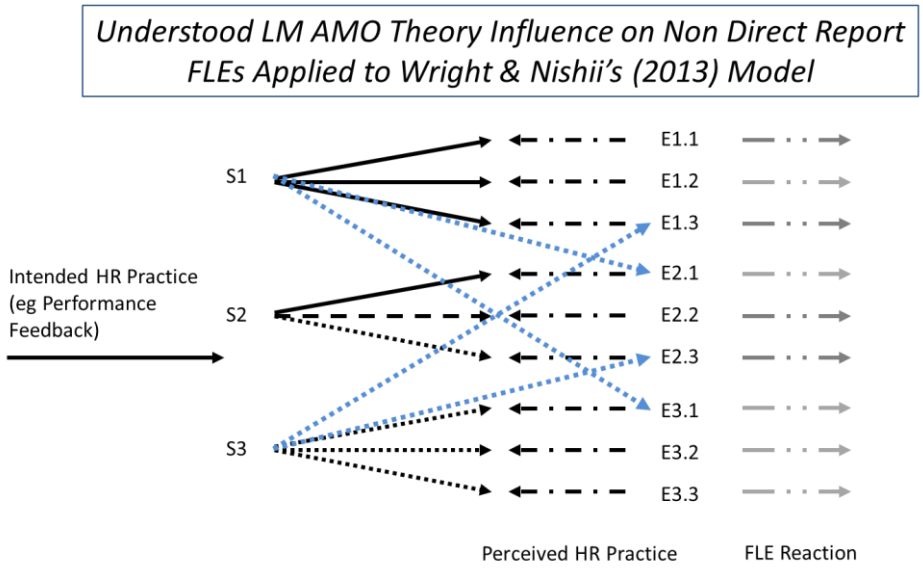

Figure 36 Understood LM AMO Theory Influence on Non Direct Report FLEs Applied to Wright & Nishii's (2013) Model

As Wright & Nishii (2013:103) state, the goal of HRM systems and the HRM practices that make them up, is to lead to "positive attitudinal reactions" of FLEs; yet if FLMs in complex environments such as this, where matrix teams are the norm, are influencing FLEs in ways similar to the AMO theory intentions of HRM practices and FLEs are in turn being influenced by multiple LMs, this makes unpicking the connection between the HRM practice and the outcome on FLE discretion in this study, as well as any variances in FLE perception of HRM practice in comparable contexts, very difficult to isolate.

Further, returning to LMX theory (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), which as described above has been used increasingly to explore the LM and FLE dyad (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Sanders et al., 2010; Alfes et al., 2013a), attempting to use the aspect of LMX theory that explores the team dynamics, namely the area relating to "Team Making Competence" (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995:226), would also therefore prove problematic in exploring these findings, as this explores the team dynamic from the perspective of that of a single team, while in this study the FLEs were found to work in a mix of formal and informal matrix teams, different from the "systems of interdependent dyadic relationships" (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995:233) which are described to exist. These might relate to Wright & Nishii's (2013) framework where the LM and FLE sit within a dyad, but the matrix team approach, coupled with LMs from outside their team being found to be influencing FLEs, means that this model of LMs and FLEs in organisations appears less relevant to those in this study.

Finally, as well as LMs influencing FLEs in non-HRM practice-related but through AMO theory HRM-related ways, it is also understood from the study (in Chapter 6.2.4) that *develops FLE ecosystem* also helped compensate for reported failings in Ochre Inc.'s FLE reward processes in a way that suggests this helped some FLEs in the study use their discretion to achieve their individual performance plan. This meant that the LM discretion was used to encourage individual FLE discretion to overcome the widely reported tensions arising from within matrix teams as a reported result of the rewards and incentive HRM system and HRM practices. Therefore *develops FLE ecosystem* is understood to be an example of LMs using their "leadership behaviours" to overcome failings in the HRM practices used in tango function during FY14 in ways that are

understood to have been likely to contribute to individual FLE performance outcomes. Purcell et al. (2003b:54) have highlighted that this type of discretion was understood to happen, but their study design meant that it was not possible to indicate which specific HRM practice was being compensated for by LM's non-HRM discretionary practices and how LMs used their discretion to do this. Purcell & Hutchinson (2007) investigated alterations to LM discretion, but this change resulted from those outside the LM population in the study, not as a result of the discretionary actions of those LMs within the study, many of whom were changed from one period to another. Harney & Jordan (2008:290) built on this to provide examples of LMs using their discretion to compensate for HRM practice failings and be the "crucial link in successfully enacting HR policies that may enhance performance". However, their study was designed to focus on the HRM practice enactment, so they were unable to isolate the non-HRM related discretion beyond being able to recognise the value and importance of LMs' non-HRM discretion, so made a call for more studies to understand more about this phenomenon. Boxall & Purcell (2008:219), echoing Truss (2001), argue further that while unable to offer an understanding of the specifics, when LMs use their discretion to overcome failings in an HRM practice they are often "keeping a sinking ship afloat". However, studies since then have focused more on the HRM enactment of LMs and not their non-HRM practice discretionary practices.

Therefore it is understood that the studies cited are the only ones in the literature against which this particular finding regarding the non-HRM discretion of LMs, and how it has compensated for a failing in the HRM system and resultant HRM practices, can be compared. Potentially, because as Guest & Bos-Nehles (2013:96) argue, the literature has focused on the presence of HRM practices and not how they are implemented, when this is examined it is done by focusing on the LM HRM practice enactment (Alfes et al., 2013a,b; Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Farndale & Kelliher, 2013) rather than on the LM non-HRM discretion (Paauwe et al., 2013; Harley, 2015).

Taken together with the findings from *cultivates team environment* and *shapes team focus*, the discretionary intervention *develops FLE ecosystem* is another example from the study where the LM is influencing FLEs in the study in ways related to HRM matters through LM discretion not related to HRM discretionary enactment, when AMO

theory is used to explore the LM discretionary practices. These LMs are influencing FLEs in ways that are understood from the literature to be related to the intent of the HRM system (Boselie et al., 2005; Wright & Nishii, 2007; Alfes et al., 2013b; Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Guest and Bos-Nehles, 2013) but which sit separately from HRM practices, and are understood to possess a possible relationship with individual FLE performance outcomes (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Harney & Jordan, 2008). All of this supports Truss' (2001:1146) call for a disaggregated view of understanding FLE performance by comparing and contrasting at various levels in order to work within the complexities of organisations in exploring the 'black box'.

7.1.5 Provides FLE Shielding – Analysis and Discussion

Guest (2011:10) stated "we have made little progress in establishing ways to measure an HR system", meaning that the way that HRM practices impacted on FLEs at that time was not well understood, which makes modelling how to understand and measure an HRM system very difficult (Paauwe et al., 2013:12). The discretionary intervention finding *provides FLE shielding* illustrated conceptually in Figure 37, is suggested to illustrate this difficulty as it involves LMs reporting deliberately using their LM discretionary practices to influence other stakeholders inside Ochre Inc. This was done reportedly so that the FLEs in their team were able to carry out their own discretionary activity in ways likely to lead to achieving their individual performance outcomes. This illustrates the complexity within Ochre Inc. but also suggests that there may be similar levels of complexity in comparable environments, making how the HRM system operates as complex in these organisations as it has been understood to be in Ochre Inc.

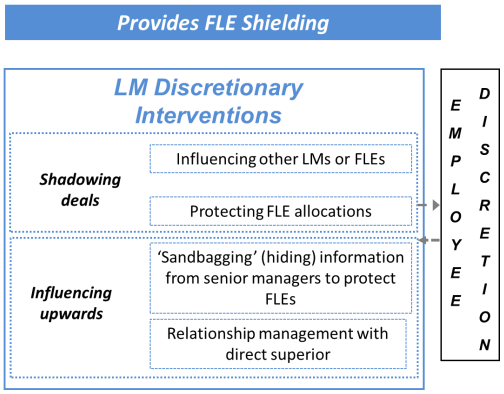

Figure 37 LM People Management Discretion – Provides FLE Shielding

The identified LM people management discretionary intervention *provides FLE shielding* was examined through the lens of AMO theory (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Purcell et al., 2003; Paauwe et al., 2013) to understand how LM people management discretion influenced their FLEs in these areas.

This exercise led to an understanding that suggests the discretionary practices involved in *shadowing deals* increased the likelihood that FLEs' own discretion was able to be discharged without others interfering with what they are doing to achieve their individual performance target, something thought likely to increase the availability of opportunities available to them. This was understood to happen in two related but distinct ways: firstly acting to influence other LMs or FLEs who could influence the FLE while working in their matrix team in ways demonstrated in 7.1.2., 7.1.3. and 7.1.4. as well as in Chapter 5; secondly those LMs or FLEs who specifically sought to change the share of a value creation deal awarded to an FLE which could have led to their discretionary activity failing to be rewarded. This was also understood to increase FLE motivation to persevere in a challenging environment through helping them maintain confidence in their LM and feeling protected from unwanted interference. Therefore these discretionary practices were understood to influence FLE motivation and opportunity.

The discretionary practices of *influencing upwards* were understood to be likely to positively enhance FLEs' motivation by removing, through 'sandbagging' and other LM discretion, pressure that might impact on FLE confidence by creating stress from unhelpfully challenging targets that would detract from their attempts to build larger value creation deals. This is also suggested to have increased opportunities for FLEs to make the choices and carry out the activities using their discretion which would let them have a greater likelihood of achieving their individual performance targets and outcomes.

All of this suggests that, in a people management context, LMs are understood to have used their discretion to influence the motivations and opportunities available to FLEs through their discretionary practices in addition to the enactment of HRM practices they have responsibilities for when considering and planning how they would create and manage their teams, as summarised in Table 29.

Table 29 Provides Team Shielding and AMO Theory (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Purcell et al., 2003; Paauwe et al., 2013)

LM Discretionary Interventions	Groupings of LM Discretionary Practices	LM Discretionary Practice Clusters	Relation to AMO Theory		
			A	M	O
Provides FLE Shielding	Shadowing Deals	Influencing LMs or other FLEs		X	X
		Protecting FLE allocations		X	X
	Influencing Upwards	'Sandbagging' information from senior managers to protect FLEs			X
		Relationship management between LM and direct superior			X

These findings taken together suggest that as well as LMs in the study influencing their direct reporting FLEs through their non-HRM related people management "leadership behaviours" (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007:3), they are also doing this through repelling unwanted influencing from LMs or FLEs with whom their own FLEs were connected in matrix teams.

This suggests, along with the findings for the other discretionary interventions above, that the way that LMs, in a context such as was found in Ochre Inc., interact with FLEs is complex and consequently so too are the ways the HRM system interacts with FLEs. This makes comparing these findings with the literature difficult, though it does support some, like Wall & Wood (2005) who have called for more research into the complexities of how HRM systems influence FLEs. This is something that is supported further by the summary of the identified connections between the non-HRM LM people management discretionary interventions found in this study and AMO theory, presented in Table 30.

Table 30 Summary of Identified Relationship between LM Non-HRM Practice Related People Management Discretion and AMO Theory (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Purcell et al., 2003; Paauwe et al., 2013)

LM Discretionary Interventions	Groupings of LM Discretionary Practices	LM Discretionary Practice Clusters	Relation to AMO Theory		
			A	M	O
Produces Team Contextualisation	Designing Directed Endeavour	Establishing aims, priorities and needs			x
	Designing Social Endeavour	Sets standards and expectations	x	x	
		Defines required team dynamic	x	x	
	Designing Capability for Endeavour	Defines team capability needed	x		
		Incorporates considerations of FLE development	x		
Cultivates Team Environment	Influencing the Dynamic within the Group	Team building	x	x	x
		Creating a 'safe' space		x	x
		Encouraging team to problem solve	x	x	x
	Influencing the Dynamic between LM and Individuals	Maintaining individual motivation		x	
		Being available for FLE		x	x
		Relationships with FLE		x	x
	Influencing the Dynamic between LM and Overall Group	Building credibility		x	
		Protecting from external pressure		x	
Shapes FLE Focus	Prioritisation Management	Setting priorities			x
		Encouraging FLE long-term thinking but pragmatic thinking	x		x
	Focusing FLE Activity Management	Helping FLE time management	x		x
		Monitoring FLE activity			x
Develops FLE Ecosystem	Providing Cross Functional Guidance	Helping manage customers in 'matrix team'	x	x	x
		Supporting FLEs' internal network building	x	x	x
		Guidance on 'matrix team' working	x	x	x
		Involving 'matrix team' members	x	x	x
Provides FLE Shielding	Shadowing Deals	Influencing LMs or other FLEs			x
		Protecting FLE allocations		x	x
	Influencing Upwards	'Sandbagging' (hiding) information from senior managers to protect FLEs			x
		Relationship management between LM and direct superior			x

7.1.6 Summary of Academic Theory Related Analysis and Discussion on LM People Management Discretionary Interventions

These understood relationships between the non-HRM discretionary interventions of LMs and AMO theory suggest that the way FLEs are influenced by the HRM system involves more than the LM enactment of HRM practices – a finding that broadens the insight of Nishii et al. (2008:538) and suggests influences on FLEs go beyond "differences in cognition".

Instead the FLEs in this study are understood to have experienced AMO theory-related discretionary interventions from their LMs, other LMs, and other FLEs, but not all of it was experienced in the context of HRM practice enactment. These are summarised

conceptually in Figure 38. This model is adapted from the 'people and performance model' (Purcell et al., 2003b:38 and updated in Boxall & Purcell, 2008) where LMs were described as using their non-HRM discretion to "lead" and "control" FLEs. This was later updated by Purcell & Hutchinson (2007:3-4) to "leadership behaviours". Here these "leadership behaviours" are presented as the five categories of discretionary intervention presented below.

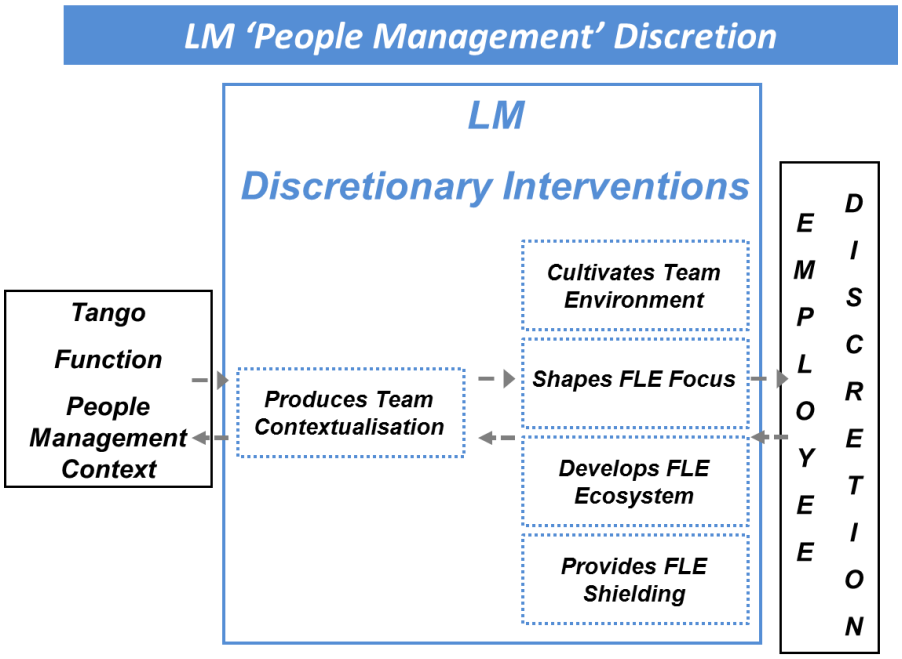

Figure 38 Model of LM Non-HRM People Management Discretion

Comparing the identified LM discretionary practices with the individual performance outcomes produced by FLEs has helped explain differences between LMs in how they carried out their people management discretion related to differences in the discretionary activity of FLEs, and used by their FLEs to develop and secure value creation deals from their customers. The study deliberately selected those LMs with the highest number of FLEs in their teams above the average FLE target for the function and those LMs with the highest number of FLEs below the same average, allowing comparing and contrasting of approaches taken by different LMs within the study.

Differences in FLE outcomes are understood to have arisen because of LM differences in which non-HRM discretionary interventions they carried out. All LMs carried out the discretionary interventions (*produces team contextualisation, cultivates team*

environment, shapes FLE focus), with some minor variations between LMs. However, it was mostly the LMs of teams with above average numbers of FLEs in them who achieved their individual performance targets who were found to have carried out most of the discretionary practices found, particularly *develops FLE ecosystem*, and *provides FLE shielding*, were more likely to be managing a team with a greater number of FLEs who achieved their target than those who did not. This is understood to have had a helpful effect on these LMs' FLEs because *develops FLE ecosystem* involved an LM's discretionary practices that provided a high degree of FLE guidance, coaching, development, which developed FLE abilities, motivation and increased the opportunities available to them, and because *provides FLE shielding* involved the LMs using discretionary practices to provide FLEs with protection from other stakeholders.

While differences existed in how LMs carried out their discretionary enactment, these were not understood to have accounted for the influences on FLE discretionary activity that led to the outcomes found. Rather, it was understood that some LMs, mostly those of the above average performing teams, used their non-HRM discretionary practices to overcome reported perceived failings in the HRM FLE reward system, which was understood to have led to challenging behaviours in Ochre Inc. during FY14. This is illustrated in Figure 39.

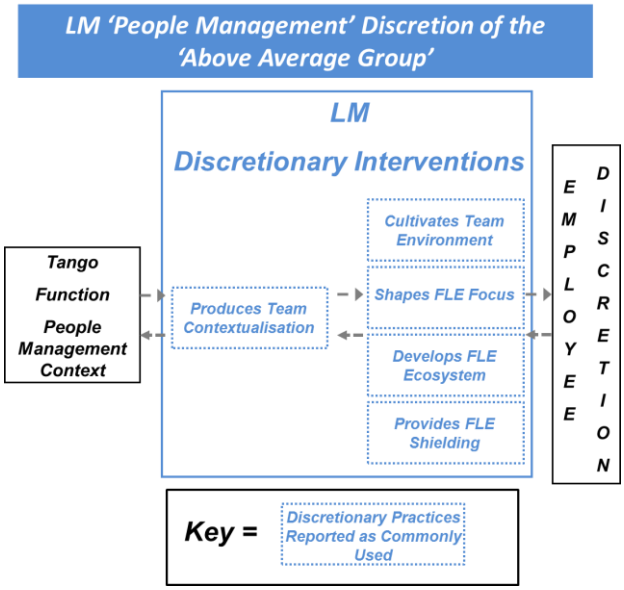

Figure 39 LM People Management Discretion of Above Average Group

The discretionary interventions in Figure 40 were used far more by the LMs with the highest number of individual FLEs who achieved their performance targets, the above average group, in tango function during FY14.

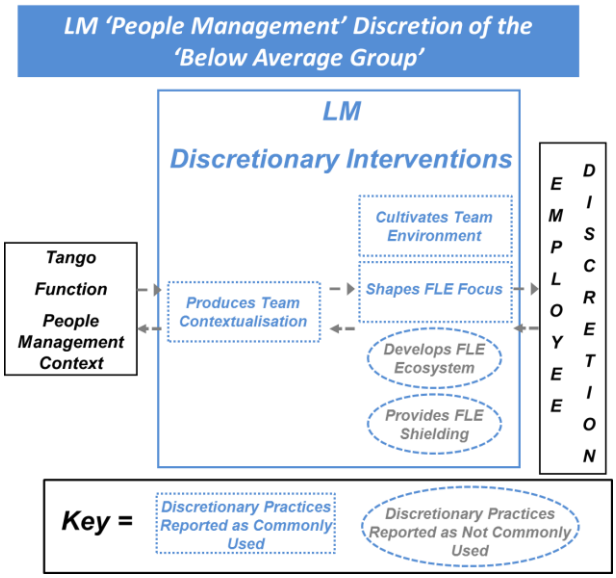

Figure 40 LM People Management Discretion of Below Average Group

By contrast, the discretionary interventions rarely used by those LMs with the lowest number of individual FLEs who achieved their individual performance targets, the below average group, in tango function during FY14 were those in the elipses in Figure 40. This shows the finding that the less successful LMs were less likely to use their discretion to influence their FLEs using the discretionary practices associated with *develops FLE ecosystem* or *provides FLE shielding*.

Therefore in service of the research question, *"How are LMs using their discretionary people management discretion to influence FLE performance outcomes?"* it would appear that in this study, the FLEs experienced LMs using discretionary interventions which were focused on helping them use their own discretion in ways that increased the likelihood of achieving their individual performance target in a complex, changed and challenging environment.

Through the discretionary intervention *produces team contextualisation*, their LMs were operating in a more business management style than would be expected from the literature and different from the supervisory approach previously found (Harris et al., 2002; Gratton & Truss, 2003; Purcell et al., 2003; Hales, 2005; Maxwell &

Farquharson, 2007; Becker et al., 2009), and where their LMs incorporated the changes in the context in tango function and Ochre Inc. more widely in how they conceptualised and carried out their non-HRM discretionary practices, including adjustments to these practices that would enhance the FLEs' abilities and motivations.

Through the discretionary intervention of *cultivates team environment,* their LMs were working within an environment which appears more complex than the LM/FLE dyad described within the literature. This included a number of steps to develop a dynamic within the team the FLE operated in that reported to their direct LM, so that this was a place where peer learning was encouraged between them and other FLEs within this same team. They would also have experienced their LM carrying out a number of LM discretionary practices to help them adjust to value creation deal selling in a cross functional environment within matrix teams, encouraging the growth of their development, maintaining their motivation during this time of change and helping them find opportunities.

Through the discretionary intervention *shapes FLE focus,* LMs were understood to use their discretion to direct the discretionary activities of FLEs in the study in ways that helped the latter to learn how to problem solve and manage themselves in more effective ways.

Through the discretionary intervention *develops FLE ecosystem,* LMs used their discretion to help FLEs navigate the complexity of matrix teams, developing FLE motivation as well as FLE opportunities, with some LMs extending these discretionary practices to other FLEs in related 'matrix teams'. Some of this would be understood to have compensated for the widely accepted failings in the reward systems, as well as the need for FLEs to quickly acquire and develop new skills.

Through *provides team shielding,* LMs were understood to be using their network to help FLEs when conflicts or disputes arose within matrix teams, typically around protection of the FLEs' share of a large value creation deal, helping maintain FLE confidence to use their own discretion as well as opportunities to have that discretionary activity lead to a successful outcome for the FLE. Finally, and the common thread relevant to the research question, is that in the experience of these non-HRM related LM people management discretionary practices, FLEs are likely to have found it hard to

distinguish the difference between these discretionary practices and those related to HRM discretionary enactment, as many of the non-HRM discretionary practices found are understood to have been likely to influence FLEs in ways similar to HRM practices. The findings illustrate that LMs are developing the abilities, skills, sometimes for longer term talent management purposes of their FLEs. This includes dealing with reward matters and overcoming problems with these, motivating FLEs, providing opportunities for them in multiple ways. Further and this is the crucial point, in many ways it is impossible to separate whether these are part of HRM practice discretionary enactment of the HRM practices such as APRs, PIPs, TRBs and PRBs, or are just how LMs in the study carry out their non-HRM responsibility people management discretionary enactment.

Finally, LMX theory has been used increasingly within the 'black box' literature as a means of exploring the LM and FLE dyad (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Sanders et al., 2010; Alfes et al., 2013a), using a 7 point scale to explore the LM and FLE dynamic (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995:237); however, as already shown, the five discretionary practices found in the study can be related to the 7 point LMX theory scale, but in practice they are not an exact match, with much of the nuance important for understanding the meaning about the intention of the practice gleaned from LMs and FLEs within the context of tango function, is at best diluted or at worst lost. Further, LMX theory (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), is modelled on the assumption that "leadership occurs through one-to-one relations between the 'leaders' and individual 'followers'" (Ladkin, 2010:56) which is thought to lead to higher levels of FLE satisfaction (Gerstner & Day, 1997), something which has been used by Alfes et al. (2013a) when investigating LMs and their understood influence on FLEs. However, the advent of the cross functional working and matrix teams in Ochre Inc. means that the dyad between the LM and FLE is now just one of a number of important relationships that the FLE and LM have to navigate.

One approach to exploring this further would be taking Graen & Uhl-Bien's (1995) LMX theory work that explores the team dynamics, namely the area relating to "Team Making Competence" (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995:226). However, that is thought likely to prove problematic as this explores the team dynamic from the perspective of that of a

single team, while in this study the FLEs were found to work in a mix of formal and informal matrix teams, differently from the "systems of interdependent dyadic relationships" (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995:233).

In this more complex model of operations for LMs and FLEs, LMX theory's "Team Making Competence" (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995:226) is not the 'wrong' model of leadership, but as the nuance and insight is understood to have been lost from the 7 point LMX theory scale (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995:237), so too it may be lost in understanding the complexity found within cross functional and matrix teams in the study. Therefore, other models may need to be considered.

For example, Path Goal Theory (Yukl, 1989), examines the way that leaders provide support and direction to enable them to achieve personal goals which are compatible with personal, team or organisational level objectives, so may be useful in exploring aspects of *cultivates team environment*, but could also be used to explore *shapes FLE focus* further, while Power and Influence Theory (Raven, 1993), examines the way that actors in organisations relate to each other and in particular the aspects of 'power' that drive influence (Raven, 1993; Yukl et al., 1996), which could prove useful in exploring *develops FLE ecosystem*.

The study suggests that while a dyadic leadership model is important for some discretionary practices, such as *influencing the dynamic between LM and individual FLEs*, for others, as has been highlighted immediately above, a dyadic model of leadership interaction appears less appropriate in this context, and instead may need to be examined using different approaches to conceptualising and understanding leadership, such as Shared Leadership (Carson et al., 2007) or Distributed Leadership (Spillane, 2006) as just two examples. These relatively new approaches to leadership recognise the social network aspect of leadership and that it emerges from multiple parties, not solely a single leader and follower (Ladkin, 2010), more appropriate to LMs and FLEs operating in an extended network of people working together (Ladkin, 2010:56). A shared or distributed leadership perspective acknowledges that, as well as the interrelationships between LMs and FLEs, there are a number of complex interdependencies which as a result mean leadership can also emerge as a "process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the

achievement of group or organisational goals or both. This influence process often involves peer, or lateral, influence and at other times involves upward or downward hierarchical influence" (Pearce & Conger, 2003:1).

All of this suggests, in service of the research question *"How are LMs using their discretionary people management discretion to influence FLE performance outcomes?"* that LMs in a people management context used a mix of discretionary practices that influenced FLE discretionary activity as described above, and in so doing also influenced their FLEs' ability, motivation and opportunity, suggesting that HRM responsibilities and FLE performance were enmeshed, rather than "symbiotic" as suggested in the literature (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007:3).

7.2 Academic Theory Related Analysis and Discussion on LM People Management Discretionary Enactment of HRM Practices

This study has presented findings on how LMs used their people management discretion to address the sub research question "*How do LMs use their people management discretion when enacting HRM practices?*" There is no consensus in the literature on the degree of responsibility, accountability and authority devolved to LMs (Hales, 2005; Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Brewster et al., 2013; Guest and Bos-Nehles, 2013; Heavey et al., 2013; Paauwe et al., 2013) therefore clarification on where responsibilities sat was sought from the HRM business partners during the background interviews. These responsibilities are summarised in Table 31.

Table 31 LM HRM Practice Responsibilities

Intention of HRM Practice	HRM Practice	Responsibilities
FLE Performance Development Ensure FLEs are able to meet performance aims of Ochre Inc.	*Annual Performance Review (APR)*	Devolved responsibility to LM and FLE for entire process
	Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)	Devolved responsibility to LM but worked with HRM business partners on the process if it progressed further
FLE Reward Ensure FLE pay is market relevant and rewards performance aims of Ochre Inc.	*Pay Review Boards (PRB)*	Shared responsibility between LM, HR and senior managers but worked with HRM business partners & senior managers throughout the process
FLE Talent Development Development of FLE's longer term potential.	*Talent Review Board (TRB)*	Devolved responsibility to LM and FLE but worked with HRM business partners & senior managers throughout the entire process

LMs in the study were found to have used their people management discretion to carry out discretionary enactment of the four different HRM practices for which they had responsibility in five ways. These were categorised into three types: those related to FLE performance, to FLE reward and to FLE development.

How each was found to be carried out by the LMs in the study with regard to the different forms of discretionary enactment is summarised in Table 32.

Table 32 LM Discretionary Enactment by HRM Practice

Intention of HRM Practice	HRM Practice	Instances of LM Discretionary Enactment				
		Literal	Earnest	Creative	Interrupted	Instructed
FLE Performance Ensure FLEs are able to meet performance aims of Ochre Inc.	*Annual Performance Review (APR)*	4	7	-	-	-
	Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)	1	1	1	2	1
FLE Reward Ensure FLE pay is market relevant and rewards performance aims of Ochre Inc.	*Pay Review Boards (PRB)*	3	-	2	-	-
FLE Development Development of FLE's longer term potential.	*Talent Review Board (TRB)*	-	2	1	-	

The first of the forms of discretionary enactment identified has been called here literal enactment, which Purcell et al. (2003:39) described as "perfunctory". The second type identified, earnest enactment, was where the process was reportedly followed by LMs using their discretion to complete/carry out the HRM practice with greater diligence and enthusiasm, encouraging FLEs, as Purcell et al. (2003) describe, "in both explicit and tacit ways". The third type, creative enactment, was where the process was understood to have been deliberately deviated from, altered or omitted entirely by the LM because the LM was aiming to achieve the intention of the HRM practice, but used their discretion to deviate from the formal process. The fourth type was interrupted enactment, which is when an LM was unable to complete their discretionary enactment of an HRM practice because of the deliberate actions of another Ochre Inc. stakeholder. The fifth and final type, instructed enactment, was where the LM reported they were ordered to carry out the HRM practice by a more senior manager.

These findings are all examples of HRM practices "actually used by a manager and their subordinates" (Paauwe et al., 2013:9), when enacting HRM practices. How these findings relate to and are informed by the literature will now be analysed and discussed with regard to the extant literature. This will firstly be framed using an adaptation of Nehles et al.'s (2006) taxonomy of five identified factors within the literature, which categorises understood determinants of LM discretionary enactment of HRM practices, and which have been updated in 2013 (Guest & Bos-Nehles, 2013): LM motivation; LM capacity; LM competence; LM support from HRM stakeholders; and, clarity of HRM policies and procedures. It will then be examined against Wright & Nishii's (2013) framework describing HRM practice intended vs. enacted, before an overall summary is produced.

7.2.1 LM Motivation Towards HRM Practice Enactment

Bos-Nehles et al. (2013:862) argue that the literature holds a consensus with regard to HRM practice discretionary enactment that LMs "do not seem to perform very well in this respect". Although more recently this understanding has begun to be split, with more findings that LMs are more motivated towards their HRM practice responsibilities than have been previously found, i.e. "most line managers in our study were motivated to play an HRM role in their organization" (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013:872). So while the prevailing consensus remains that LMs find acceptance and ownership of their HRM practice responsibilities problematic, this study belongs to those, such as Bos-Nehles et al. (2013), who have found greater motivation among LMs than has previously been the case.

All LMs were found to be accepting of their HRM practice responsibilities and no evidence was found of LMs in the study 'sabotaging' HRM practice enactment (Khilji & Wang, 2006; Wright & Nishii, 2007; Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Paauwe et al., 2013), though some were unhappy with aspects of some HRM practices.

Within the study the most commonly used LM HRM practice, the APR, was found to have been applied by all in the study and, further, this was done because the HRMBP confirmed they had chosen to use their discretion to do so, a finding which supports those calling for the inclusion of multiple levels and multiple stakeholders (Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Brewster et al., 2013; Guest & Bos-Nehles, 2013; Harley, 2015; Boxall et

al., 2016) when exploring the 'black box'. LMs were found to have used their discretionary enactment to carry out the APR HRM practice in either a diligent way, *literal enactment* or in an enthusiastic way, *earnest enactment*. This, supported by other findings in the study, such as LMs using their non-HRM practice-related discretionary practices to support HRM related intentions, as well as LMs vocally offering their explicit acceptance of this responsibility, suggests that, as in the findings of Bos-Nehles et al. (2013), LMs were motivated because they accepted their responsibility for this HRM practice; their universal discretionary compliance is taken to demonstrate this. This was understood to have been done professionally as a minimum and in slightly more than half the reported instances, enthusiastically.

Bos-Nehles et al. (2013:870) deduced that there was no relationship between the levels of LM motivation towards an HRM practice and how well the LMs implement these practices. This study found no discernible difference between LMs and the number of people in their team who achieved their individual FLE performance outcome, whether *literal enactment* or *earnest enactment* was used by their LM in the discretionary enactment of the APR HRM practice, suggesting while differences in LM discretionary enactment were found when carrying out the APR process, the differences between *literal enactment* and *earnest enactment* in isolation did not explain the differences in FLE performance outcomes in this study. Taken in concert with Bos-Nehles et al.'s (2013) finding, this suggests that, as well as supporting Bos-Nehles et al.'s (2013:870) position that LM motivation for carrying out HRM practices is not a determinant of "implementation effectiveness", LM motivation in isolation has been found here not to be a determinant of individual FLE performance outcomes.

Within the study there was a variation in LM approach to differing HRM practices, with the APR achieving universal compliance and usage, but with less apparent enthusiasm from LMs towards the PIP HRM practice for which they had responsibility. This suggests that LM motivation towards particular HRM practices varies. With the PIP it was both less prevalent and less popular, and carried out in the widest variety of ways, with examples of all the types of discretionary enactment found, including two instances where external stakeholders intervened on how the LM used their discretion for HRM practice enactment. This suggests that where LMs are accepting of their HRM people

management responsibilities but disagree with the credibility of the process, a wide variety of discretionary enactment styles may be the outcome.

A similar but subtly different approach was found with the TRB practice responsibility. The small number of LMs who described carrying out their TRB HRM practice responsibilities for what was a new process and one which in many ways contradicted many of the messages coming from senior managers within Ochre Inc., did so in ways described as either *earnest enactment* or *creative enactment.* This adds further to Bos-Nehles et al.'s (2013) deduced findings. This study illustrates that LMs not being motivated towards an HRM practice, but this lack of motivation not being related to how they subsequently apply their HRM practice discretionary enactment, does not automatically relate to "willingness to perform HRM tasks" (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013:865).

Therefore LMs in the study appeared to be wholly aware and accepting of their HRM practice responsibilities; however, they differed in their motivation towards particular HRM practices. When they are understood to have agreed with the intentions of the HRM practices, outlined in Table 33, then they were found to apply themselves with either professional diligence or, in a number of cases, either enthusiasm or innovative ingenuity, such as in the examples provided of *creative enactment* of the PIP HRM practice and the TRB practice, vocal critics of both being understood to have been committed to supporting the intentions of each HRM practice.

Table 33 Non-HRM Discretionary Groups of Practice Which Support HRM Practice Enactment

Intention of HRM Practice	HRM Practice	Non-HRM Discretionary Groups of Practice Which Support HRM Practice Enactment
FLE Performance Development Ensure FLEs are able to meet performance aims of Ochre Inc.	*Annual Performance Review (APR)*	Designing Directed Endeavour; Designing Capability for Endeavour; Influencing the Dynamic within the Group; Prioritisation Management
	Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)	Designing Directed Endeavour; Designing Capability for Endeavour; Influencing the Dynamic within the Group
FLE Reward Ensure FLE pay is market relevant and rewards performance aims of Ochre Inc.	*Pay Review Boards (PRB)*	Designing Directed Endeavour
FLE Talent Development Development of FLE's longer term potential.	*Talent Review Board (TRB)*	Designing Directed Endeavour; Designing Capability for Endeavour

Both of these examples went even further than the creativity of LMs found by Harney & Jordan (2008) or alluded to by Purcell et al. (2003) to overcome perceived problems in the HRM practice itself in order to ensure it achieved the intention with which the LMs are understood to have agreed.

The findings here support Bos-Nehles et al.'s (2013) findings that LM motivation *per se* is not associated with LM implementation effectiveness, and adds to them that LM motivation is also not found to have been related to individual FLE performance outcomes. In addition this study found no relationship between the motivation from an LM to an HRM practice and the subsequent level of enthusiasm of the discretionary enactment or the effectiveness of that discretionary enactment.

All of this suggests that LM motivation is more complex and nuanced than the extant literature has identified and because of this is supportive of caution from interpreting overtly from levels of LM motivation for HRM practice enactment (Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Guest & Bos-Nehles, 2013; Harley, 2015; Boxall et al., 2016).

7.2.2 LM Capacity for HRM Practice Enactment

The consensus in the literature is that LMs lack capacity, meaning time, to devote sufficient time to their HRM practice responsibilities (Nehles et al., 2006; Wright & Nishii, 2007; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2008; Bos-Nehles, 2010; Guest & Bos-Nehles, 2013). There is no consensus on which HRM practices have been devolved to LMs (Renwick, 2003; Nehles et al., 2006; Bredin and Söderlund, 2007; Heavey et al., 2013; Paauwe et al., 2013); however, those HRM practices found in the study and devolved to LMs were found to be similar to the HRM practices already found to have been devolved to LMs in the literature.

This is outlined in Table 34.

Table 34 HRM Practices devolved to LMs Compared to the Literature

Intention of HRM Practice	HRM Practice	Identified As Devolved to LMs in the Literature
FLE Performance Development Ensure FLEs are able to meet performance aims of Ochre Inc.	*Annual Performance Review (APR)*	McGovern et al., 1997; Whittaker and Marchington, 2003; Purcell et al., 2003a; Nijman et al., 2006; Paauwe et al., 2013; Heavey et al., 2013.
	Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)	Purcell et al., 2003a; Renwick, 2003; Whittaker and Marchington, 2003; Cunningham et al.. 2004; Nijman et al., 2006; Maxwell & Farquharson, 2007; Paauwe et al., 2013; Heavey et al., 2013.
FLE Reward Ensure FLE pay is market relevant and rewards performance aims of Ochre Inc.	*Pay Review Boards (PRB)*	Nowicki and Rosse, 2002; MacNeil, 2003; Purcell et al., 2003a; Nijman et al., 2006; Paauwe et al., 2013; Heavey et al., 2013.
FLE Talent Development Development of FLE's longer term potential.	*Talent Review Board (TRB)*	Whittaker and Marchington, 2003; Purcell et al., 2003a; Renwick, 2003; Cunningham et al., 2004; Nijman et al., 2006; Maxwell & Farquharson, 2007; Paauwe et al., 2013; Heavey et al., 2013.

It was reported that LMs held full responsibility and autonomy for the HRM practice of APR only and were required to work alongside, but worked with, HRMBPs and senior managers for all the others. Where responsibility was reportedly devolved, meaning the APR, the PIP and the TRB, though the LM worked with others, the responsibility for the intention of the HRM practice being achieved was understood to remain with the LM. Overall, this study did not find that LMs interviewed in the study lacked capacity for carrying out their people management HRM responsibilities, something supported by the HRMBP and from many of the accounts of the FLEs in the study.

Further, it was also found that while those in the study accepted, and in many examples shared in the findings, and embraced this aspect of their people management responsibilities, this was understood to not always be the case for all of the LMs in tango function. This may be a result of many of the HRM practices found being aligned with the FLE performance responsibilities LMs in the study are understood to have possessed. However, the TRB HRM practice which was understood to have been least aligned with the short-term performance aims of Ochre Inc. was found to be unpopular but still carried out with ingenuity or enthusiasm in the examples found.

The only identified impediment to LMs carrying out their LM HRM practice discretionary enactment was in situations where they were interrupted by other Ochre

Inc. stakeholders. This was either by the HRMBP, in one situation where the LM was not following the procedure closely enough, or when a senior manager intervened in what was reported as an act intended to protect the FLE because the senior manager favoured that FLE. These instances were labelled *interrupted enactment*.

Taken together with the findings above in 7.1, where LMs' non-HRM discretionary practices were understood to influence FLE ability, motivation and opportunity when examined from an AMO theory perspective (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Purcell et al., 2003; Paauwe et al., 2013), suggests that the way LMs in the study undertook the twin people management responsibilities is more similar to being enmeshed, rather than "symbiotic" as previously described by Purcell & Hutchinson (2007:3). Therefore, while capacity was described as a factor influencing how LMs use their discretionary enactment, evidence of this was not found in this study, contrary to what has been found in previous studies (McGovern et al., 1997; Hales, 2005; Watson et al., 2007; Hutchinson & Purcell, 2010).

7.2.3 LM Competence for HRM Practice Enactment

Bos-Nehles et al. (2013:870) suggest that when LMs have greater ability for effective enactment of HRM practices they are more likely to be effective in their HRM practice discretionary enactment. Hope-Hailey et al. (2005:64) suggested that LMs were not "capable" in enacting HRM practices. Whittaker & Marchington (2003) take the view that LMs have a lack of competence due to inadequate training, skill or capability (Truss, 2001; Renwick, 2003; Whittaker & Marchington, 2003); however, in this study there was little evidence that LMs lacked the skills or capability to carry out the four HRM practices for which they held responsibility. The only identified exception to this was the LM of the most successful team in tango function, who was found not to have followed the correct procedure for the HRM PIP practice therefore this was interrupted by the HRMBP, and labelled in the study as *interrupted enactment*. This was explained as arising because the LM was new to the organisation, rather than an overall concern with their competence in how they discharged their HRM practice responsibilities. Therefore, while many in the literature describe how LMs lacked competence in their competence for HRM practice enactment, there was little suggestion this arose through

a lack of competence on the part of the LMs in the study, something corroborated by the HRMBP and the FLEs in the study.

This is potentially for three reasons. Firstly the debate on devolving HRM practice responsibilities is over 20 years old (McGovern et al., 1997). In the intervening time it is likely that, for the LMs in the study, possessing HRM practices is something that has become normal, a finding suggested by the high number of LMs in the study for whom HRM practices and the intentions appear enmeshed as part of their overall people management responsibilities and something alluded to clearly by a number of the LMs in the study. A second reason is the level of technical automation. Ochre Inc. is known to have invested in an expensive "dot.com" which minimises the level of knowledge beyond the skills or experience in carrying out the HRM practice itself. This may have allowed less time to be spent by LMs on bureaucratic HRM related tasks (Harris et al., 2002; Hope-Hailey et al., 2005; Watson et al., 2007) and more time spent interacting with FLEs. Finally, the study was not designed to measure HRM practice "competence" in a defined way.

Therefore it is possible that LMs in the study by a defined measure lacked competence; however, as that form of data was neither required nor sought it is not possible to explore this or draw further conclusions beyond the findings presented here.

7.2.4 LM Support from HRMBP for HRM Practice Enactment

Renwick (2000), Whittaker & Marchington (2003) and Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007, suggest that there is a tension between HRM stakeholders and LMs, something Guest and Bos-Nehles (2013:96) view as an area where "we still know nothing about how this relationship can best be managed". By contrast, the relationship between the HRMBP and the LMs was understood to be important for the LMs in the study and a productive one overall. This can be attributed to the deliberate latitude the HRMBP provided to the LMs, allowing them freedom to use their experience and discretion which the LMs viewed as necessary, given the challenges they faced and their knowledge of the context. The freedom the HRMBP gave to LMs in their discretionary enactment of the HRM practice for APR, may be related to the high level of compliance found within the study. As well as freedom, the HRMBP encouraged LMs uncomfortable with the HRM practice for PIP to use their discretion to carry this out in an innovative way using

creative enactment. As a result, the intention of the HRM practice is understood to have been achieved, while the HRMBP benefited from a revised HRM practice designed by the LM which was adopted within Ochre Inc. A similar outcome arose when an LM was unhappy with the TRB process and as a result was also allowed to develop a talent development process using *creative enactment*.

These findings therefore suggest that in this study the flexible and supportive approach of the HRMBP is understood to have encouraged LMs to comply with the APR HRM practice and to attempt to help HRM practices achieve their intentions when enacted by LMs by allowing freedom to deviate from the described processes but, as understood, maintaining a focus on the FLE outcome that was intended. This appears to have enhanced the relationship of the HRMBP with LMs as well as the way they applied themselves to the discretionary enactment of their HRM practice responsibilities. This supports the contention of Guest and Bos-Nehles (2013:96) that too much focus can be put on HRM practices and not on the effectiveness of them when enacted, as well as providing an example of the informal or real culture (Truss, 2001) where it is in concert with HRMBPs not in isolation, that LMs are adapting HRM practices to make them more appropriate for the contexts in which they are enacted (Boxall & Purcell, 2008:219).

This study suggests that what constitutes quality may arise from negotiation and latitude in HRMBPs allowing LMs to use their discretion, rather than the enforcement of operational HRM practice compliance (Khilji & Wang, 2006), and in so doing is more likely to prevent LMs themselves from falling into the trap of becoming too bureaucratic (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013).

7.2.5 Clarity of HRM Practice Policies and Procedures

Some HRM practices, such as the APR, appeared straightforward, possibly because of the "dot.com" system described, though also because the LMs were experienced in using HRM practices. These were found to have been complied with and LMs were understood to have been allowed and supported by the HRMBP to use their discretion to carry these out. Conversely, a small number of HRM practices were reported as problematic for LMs and FLEs in the study. Bos-Nehles et al. (2013:870) suggest that when LMs have greater ability for effective enactment of HRM practices, they are more

likely to be effective in their HRM practice discretionary enactment, especially when they have “clearer policies and procedures”. Only the TRB practice was found to be too bureaucratic and took up too much time, which was possible because it was a new HRM practice and not yet “institutionalised” (Wright & Nishii, 2013:95) and established. Alternatively it may also reflect a lack of credibility for longer term FLE development in an environment where even the HRMBP has stated that performance is paramount above all else. However, it was still understood to have been embraced with enthusiasm by those LMs who were described carrying it out. Further, when it came to unclear or unhelpful HRM practices or policies, the finding is that LMs used their non-HRM discretionary practices to compensate for these reported failings, especially those relating to HRM reward. These were reported failings for the HRM reward practices, making them unsupportive of matrix team working and value creation deal building. In acting this way, LMs in this study were understood to have used their discretion to overcome conflicts created by the performance management systems and rewards systems for LMs.This is illustrated in Table 35, which shows the groupings of discretionary practice (*produces team contextualisation*, *develops FLE ecosystem* and *provides FLE shielding*) which are understood to have been used by LMs, using their non-HRM discretion, to compensate for these failings.

Table 35 LM Non-HRM Discretionary Interventions to Address FLE Reward Failings

'People Management' Discretion	Interventions	Groupings of LM Practices	Understood to be Used to Overcome Described Failings of FLE Reward Incentive Scheme
Produces Team Contextualisation	Designing Directed Endeavour	Establishing aims, priorities and needs	x
	Designing Social Endeavour	Sets standards and expectations	x
		Defines required team dynamic	x
	Designing Capability for Endeavour	Defines team capability needed	x
		Incorporates considerations of FLE development	
Cultivates Team Environment	Influencing the Dynamic within the Group	Team building	
		Creating a 'safe' space	
		Encouraging team to problem solve	
	Influencing the Dynamic between LM and Individuals	Maintaining individual motivation	x
		Being available for FLEs	
		Relationships with FLEs	
	Influencing the Dynamic between LM and Overall Group	Building credibility	
		Protecting from external pressure	x
Shapes FLE Focus	Prioritisation Management	Setting priorities	
		Encouraging long-term thinking but pragmatic thinking	
	Focusing FLE Activity Management	Helping FLE time management	
		Monitoring FLE activity	x
Develops FLE Ecosystem	Providing Cross Functional Guidance	Helping manage customers in 'matrix team'	x
		Supporting FLEs' internal network building	x
		Guidance on 'matrix team' working	x
		Involving 'matrix team' members	x
Provides FLE Shielding	Shadowing Deals	Influencing LMs or other FLEs	x
		Protecting FLE allocations	x
	Influencing Upwards	'Sandbagging' information from senior managers to protect FLEs	x
		Relationship management between LM and direct superior	

But it was clearly problematic for LMs and FLEs, though this did not seem to decrease FLE perceptions of LMs. Even here, where the perception was overwhelmingly negative because of the bureaucracy and potentially because the HRM practice focused on an area that LMS and FLEs did not find credible, long-term FLE development, the LMs were understood to have applied themselves to addressing these shortcomings and attempting to support it.

This is in contrast to much of the literature which finds that LMs act as impediments when they are not motivated towards an HRM practice or find it bureaucratic (McGovern et al., 1997; Harris et al., 2002; Hope-Hailey et al., 2005; Purcell &

Hutchinson, 2007: Wright & Nishii, 2007). The difference from previous findings appears to be because the LMs in this study were understood to be supportive of the intention of the HRM practice. Though this difference in the findings from this study in this and other areas regarding LM discretionary enactment suggests further research on new HRM practice implementation, as called for by Paauwe et al. (2013:10), is justified.

Therefore, overall, the findings presented a mix of clarity of the HRM practices LMs had, with a resultant mix in how LMs used their HRM discretionary enactment to address these. The HRM practices that were understood to have been clear and straightforward, LMs complied with; however, those that were less clear or helpful, such as FLE reward, they used their non-HRM discretion or *creative enactment* to work around. With the TRB process, a new HRM practice, LMs were vocally dismissive but found, through their discretionary enactment understood to have been used, to have been supportive.

This also suggests that how LMs are reacting to their HRM practice responsibilities is complex, "underlining the added value" (Farndale & Kelliher, 2013:890) LMs are increasingly understood to provide when using their discretion to enact HRM practices related to individual FLE performance, in ways different from those previously understood (McGovern et al., 1997; Truss, 2001; Maxwell & Watson, 2002; Renwick, 2003; Whittaker & Marchington, 2003; Hope-Hailey et al., 2005), but supportive of Becker et al.'s (2009) view that LMs' contribution to adding value in this way is important to individual FLE performance outcomes.

7.2.6 People Management Discretionary Enactment of HRM Practices – Intended vs. Enacted

Gerhart et al. (2000) argued there was a difference between the espoused 'rhetoric' of HRM policy and the enacted 'reality' of HRM practice, followed by Truss (2001) who went further by highlighting the importance of recognising the importance of human agency within the HRM system. Wright & Nishii (2007) continued this argument and made the case that a difference exists between management intentions, which positions the LM as a filter or barrier between what was intended and the outcome achieved

(McGovern et al., 1997; Nehles et al., 2006; Nishii & Wright, 2007; Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Farndale & Kelliher, 2013; Wright & Nishii, 2013) and illustrated in Figure 41.

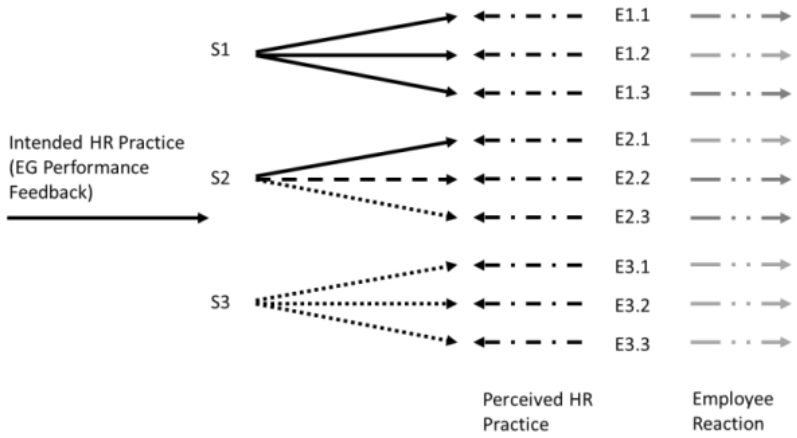

Figure 41 Inconsistent HRM Practice Effect Caused by LM Variations in Implementation (Wright & Nishii, 2013)

The implementation of HRM practices by LMs through their discretion (Truss, 2001) therefore means that what is enacted may differ from what was intended (Wright & Haggerty, 2005; Wright & Nishii, 2013) and this is argued to lead to negative effects on HRM practice effectiveness, FLE outcomes and, potentially, organisational performance, as well as on the careers of the LMs themselves (McGovern et al., 1997; Nowicki & Rosse, 2002; Renwick & MacNeil, 2002; Truss et al., 2002; Nijman et al., 2006; Goodhew et al., 2008).

To understand whether this perspective matched the findings in this study, the level of variance found in the ways LMs used their discretionary enactment to carry out the two HRM practices in the study most closely linked to individual FLE, the APR HRM practice and the PIP HRM practice, were compared to the LM's position as an above or below average LM. This is shown in Table 36.

Table 36 LM Variation in Discretionary HRM Practice Enactment and Performance

LMs In Study		HRM Practice Discretionary Enactment for FLE Performance	
		Annual Performance Review (APR)	Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)
Above Average LMs	Michael	Literal	Interrupted
	Alan	Earnest	Creative
	Paul	Earnest	Literal
	Jeff	Earnest	-
	James	Literal	-
	Terry	Earnest	-
Below Average LMs	Rita	Literal	-
	Jim	Earnest	-
	Keith	Earnest	-
	Aidan	Earnest	Earnest
	Arthur	Literal	Interrupted /Instructed

The LMs in the study have already been described as possessing the desire, capacity, and significant support from the HRMBP to help them enact the HRM practices for which they have responsibility and, while not all HRM practices in the study were clear, the two used in this analysis were both clearly defined and well understood. It is also thought that most LMs in the study possessed the abilities needed to carry out these two HRM practices. Yet this analysis suggests that despite these contingent factors identified in the literature being understood as favourable for the LMs in the study, that there was a high degree of variability of discretionary enactment taken by LMs in the study, which is consistent with the views of Wright & Nishii (2013:95), confirming that it is indeed a "challenge to implement a consistent set of processes". This echoes findings by Farndale & Kelliher (2013:891) that the "assignment of HRM practices to line managers increases the potential for variation in what is enacted".

However, the study found that variability of LM discretionary enactment in isolation for these HRM practices was not related to FLE performance, but instead was distributed by the LMs in the study. Variability of HRM discretionary enactment was suggested to be related to individual FLE performance outcomes in section 6.3 above; however, this was through LMs in the study who were understood to have used their non-HRM discretionary interventions for *develops FLE ecosystem* and *provides FLE shielding* to compensate for perceived failings in the HRM practice for reward. This is presented as a comparison in Table 37, with the non-HRM discretionary practices encircled.

Table 37 LM Non-HRM Discretion Understood to Compensate for Perceived HRM Practice Failings

LMs In Study		HRM Practice Discretionary Enactment for FLE Performance		Non HRM Practice Discretionary Interventions				
		Annual Performance Review (APR)	Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)	Produce Team Contextualisation	Cultivate Team Environment	Shapes Team Focus	Develops Team Ecosystem	Provides Team Shielding
Above Average LMs	Michael	Literal	Interrupted	X	X	X	-	X
	Alan	Earnest	Creative	X	X	X	X	X
	Paul	Earnest	Literal	X	X	X	X	X
	Jeff	Earnest	-	X	X	X	X	X
	James	Literal	-	X	X	X	-	-
	Terry	Earnest	-	X	X	X	X	-
Below Average LMs	Rita	Literal	-	X	X	X	-	-
	Jim	Earnest	-	X	X	X	-	X
	Keith	Earnest	-	X	X	X	X	X
	Aidan	Earnest	Earnest	X	X	X	-	-
	Arthur	Literal	Interrupted / Instructed	X	X	X	-	-

This suggests that the LMs who used their people management discretion to overcome these perceived weaknesses were those more likely to be among the top performing LMs in the study, which further suggests variations in how individual HRM practices in isolation are not necessarily connected with variations in individual FLE performance outcomes within this study. To understand fully what effects may be present that influence FLE performance outcomes, it is necessary to understand what relationship LM discretionary enactment of a given HRM practice has to the discretionary practices present – rather variation in where LMs apply their combined people management non-HRM discretionary practices and their HRM discretionary enactment, which is understood in this study to influence individual FLE performance outcomes.

From the understanding from section 7.1.4., that LMs and FLEs were understood to be influencing those outside their direct teams in ways likely to influence their ability, motivation and opportunity, the overall suggestion is a more complex effect from LMs on individual FLEs within this study than the dyad that is the consensus model for exploring the LM and FLE dynamic in the literature (Boxall & Purcell, 2008:221; Wright & Nishii, 2013:93).

Therefore, in this study, how LMs used their HRM practice discretion appears to have had less impact on individual FLE performance outcomes than the combination of what the discretion was used to do, in concert with LMs' non-HRM discretionary practices,

rather than how the HRM practices were carried out in isolation. This is different from the influence of LM behaviours on FLE attitudes as influences on FLE behaviours (Alfes et al., 2013b; Farndale & Truss, 2013), but rather what changes to LM discretionary activity the HRM discretionary enactment in concert with the non-HRM discretionary practices were carried out together to achieve. This also suggests, in support of the proposition above, that within this study there was found to exist a more complex form of interaction between LM HRM discretionary responsibilities, HRM discretionary enactment and non-HRM discretionary practices than the "symbiotic" interrelation posited by Purcell & Hutchinson (2007:3), Alfes et al. (2013a,b), Bos-Nehles et al. (2013) and Farndale & Kelliher (2013).

This means that rather the dichotomous picture of LMs rejecting their HRM responsibilities (Renwick, 2003), deliberately sabotaging HRM practices (Hope-Hailey et al., 2005), showing a lack of awareness (Nowicki & Rosse, 2002), avoiding HRM responsibility (Goodhew et al., 2008), when in a situation of change in the organisation, while they vocally complained about some HRM practices, they were not found to separate these from their other people management responsibilities. Instead some of them focused on how they could make their FLEs as effective as they could be, with the support of the HRMBP in how some of them did this, and either overcame the failings in the HRM practices, or applied themselves enthusiastically to make them work, despite their protestations.

Taken all together, this further adds to the emerging view developed from these findings that the LMs in this study, in order to meet the challenges they and their FLEs have faced with cross functional working, value creation selling and matrix teams, were using their people management discretion in ways that were more 'enmeshed' in practice in this study, than the 'symbiotic' quality that people management responsibilities are often categorised as having in the extant literature. It is important to qualify this perception of the responsibilities held and complexities faced by the LMs in this study, compared to those in the literature (Hales, 2005); however, Becker et al. (2005, 2009) suggest the level of complexity faced by LMs of FLEs in this study is not as rare as the consensus in the HRM literature suggests.

7.2.7 Summary of Academic Theory Related Analysis and Discussion of LM People Management Discretionary Enactment of HRM Practices

This section has reviewed the findings of the study against the extant literature to address the sub research question, "*How are LMs using their people management discretion in the enactment of HR practices?"* LMs in the study were found to have used their people management discretion to carry out discretionary enactment of four different HRM practices for which they had responsibility in five ways. This was structured using an adaptation of Nehles et al.'s (2006) taxonomy of five identified factors within the literature, which categorises the understood determinants of LM discretionary enactment of HRM practices and Wright & Nishii's (2013) framework describing HRM practice as intended vs. enacted.

When carrying these out, the *level of motivation* for them to carry out their people management HRM practice responsibilities, though, differed in their motivation towards individual HRM practices; however, variation in motivation towards HRM practices did not automatically appear to influence how they carried out their discretionary enactment for that HRM practice. Rather, it was understood with examples more detailed than hitherto found in the literature that when LMs are in support of the intention of the practice, even if vocal in disliking it, they still appear to have worked hard to make that HRM practice achieve this intention, suggesting also that LMs' views of HRM practices do not always translate into the way they use their discretion to enact them. Further, the study found no relationship between understood LM motivation levels towards an HRM practice and FLE performance outcomes, and adds to them LM motivation, which is also not found to have been related to individual FLE performance outcomes.

All of this suggests that LM motivation is more complex and nuanced than the extant literature has identified and because of this is supportive of caution from interpreting overtly from levels of LM motivation for HRM practice enactment.

Regarding *LM capacity* and *ability* for carrying out their HRM practice discretion, the only significant impediments were found when others interrupted the LM in fulfilling their HRM responsibilities, but only two examples of this were found in the study. Little evidence was available to suggest that LMs lacked the skills or capability to carry out

the four HRM practices for which they held responsibility, so competencies were not found to be of significance. This may have been aided by technology removing some of the bureaucracy from the HRM processes, but the study was not designed to reveal LM competence so this may also have influenced the findings achieved.

The HRMBP was found to be highly supportive of the wide variety of approaches taken by LMs in the study and the ways they used their discretion to carry out the five HRM practices. These findings suggest that in this study this flexible and supportive approach of the HRMBP is understood to have encouraged LMs to comply with the APR HRM practice and attempted to help HRM practices achieve their intentions when enacted by LMs, by allowing freedom to deviate from the described processes, but as understood, maintaining a focus on the FLE outcome that was intended. This appears to have enhanced the relationship of the HRMBP with LMs as well as the way they applied themselves to the discretionary enactment of their HRM practice responsibilities. Further, this suggests that what constitutes quality in HRM practice discretionary enactment, meaning how closely that HRM practice comes to achieving the intention behind it, may arise from the extent of negotiation and latitude in the discretionary approach taken by the HRMBP. This is because in this study the HRMBP, by using their own discretion to encourage experimentation and latitude of LM discretionary enactment, as long as the intention of the HRM practice was being, rather than taking either a prescriptive approach or focusing solely on enforcement of operational HRM practice compliance, provided helpful encouragement to the LMs in the study.

Regarding *HRM practice clarity*, all HRM practices were understood to be clear and straightforward in operation, potentially helped by the "dot.com" system and possibly aided by LM experience in these matters. Even in instances where LMs' perception of an HRM practice was negative because of bureaucracy, the LMs were understood to have still applied their discretion to address perceived shortcomings and attempted to support the HRM practice so it was enacted as intended. This is something that is in contrast to much of the literature, which finds that LMs act as impediments when they are not motivated towards the intention of the HRM practice.

Therefore, overall, the findings presented most HRM practices as being straightforward but for those that were less clear or helpful, such as FLE reward, LMs used either non-

HRM discretionary practices or *creative enactment* to find ways to work around these problems and still meet the intention of the HRM practice, or policy. This suggests that how LMs are reacting to their HRM practice responsibilities is complex, underlining what Farndale and Kelliher (2013:890) describe as "added value", that LMs can add, but in ways different from those previously described in detail in the literature (McGovern et al., 1997; Purcell et al., 2003; Hope-Hailey et al., 2005; Nehles et al., 2006; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Boxall & Purcell, 2008:219; Harney & Jordan, 2008; Bos-Nehles, 2010; Alfes et al., 2013a,b; Farndale & Kelliher et al., 2013; Guest & Bos-Nehles, 2013).

There was a *high degree of variability of* discretionary enactment taken by LMs, echoing findings in the literature; however, the study found that variability of LM discretionary enactment in isolation for these HRM practices was not related to FLE performance, but instead was distributed throughout the LMs in the study (Khilji & Wang, 2006; Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Wright & Nishii, 2013). Yet this study found that variability of LM HRM enactment had a more complex relationship with FLE performance outcomes than the literature suggests, as it was found that how LMs are using their non-HRM discretionary practices is influencing the abilities, motivation and opportunities of FLEs, not just employee attitudes, and LM non-HRM practices were found to have been used to overcome reported failings in the HRM practices and policies. Therefore, like LM motivation, LM variation, through their discretionary HRM practice enactment, was not found to impede the performance outcomes of FLEs. This is taken to mean that when considering or examining HRM practices enacted by LMs with people management responsibilities, this study suggests LM non-HRM discretionary practices have a meaningful and complex interrelationship with LM HRM discretionary enactment, based on the enmeshed nature of the people management responsibilities and the way those responsibilities have been met by some LMs in this study. This is a more complex and interconnected relationship than that found within the literature so far (McGovern et al., 1997; Renwick, 2003; Whittaker & Marchington, 2003; Alfes et al., 2013a,b; Farndale & Kelliher, 2013).

In this regard this study has provided examples of the 'real' culture of the organisation (Truss, 2001) and examples of LMs helping overcome weaknesses in HRM practices

with which they still disagree (Boxall & Purcell, 2008). The variations in enactment were not found because the LMs were understood to view the HRM practices as being "against their interests" (McGovern et al., 1997; Hope-Hailey et al., 2005; Boxall & Purcell, 2008:219), but because they viewed these HRM practices as impediment to their FLEs achieving their individual performance outcomes.

These findings are summarised in the conceptual model in Figure 42, which highlights the identified HRM practice responsibilities and the five different types of discretionary enactment LMs used to meet these HRM responsibilities, in a people management context, alongside and often intertwined or enmeshed with their non-HRM FLE performance responsibilities. This model is adapted from the 'people and performance model' (Purcell et al., 2003 and updated in Boxall & Purcell, 2008) and the separation of LM HRM practice discretion into two related but separate acts: "implement" and "enact" (Purcell et al., 2003b:38).

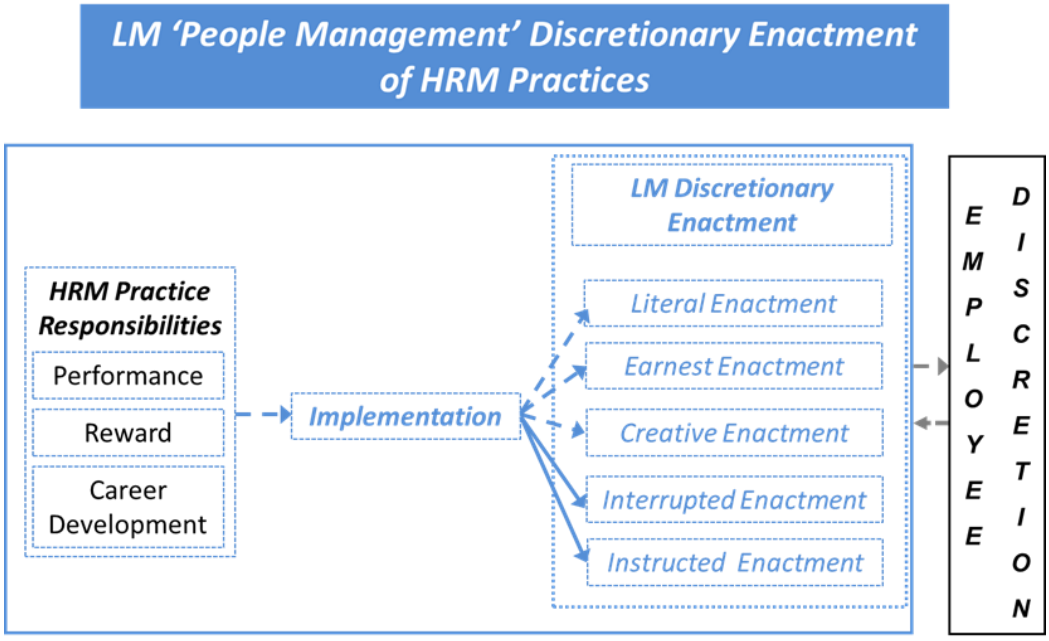

Figure 42 LM People Management HRM Practice Discretion

7.3 *Techne* Analysis and Discussion on LM People Management Discretion Design Proposition

The purpose of this empirical study is to address the research question *"How have LMs used their people management discretion to influence individual FLE performance*

outcomes?" As this is an Executive DBA thesis, this work is expected to have significance beyond the academic literature by producing a contribution to new knowledge and having an impact on practice.

As part of that I present here a design proposition (Romme, 2003), meaning "a way of presenting knowledge linking interventions to outcomes", which is intended to help those in organisations understand why the outcomes they witness are coming about so that they can make choices on how they should intervene so that they can influence deliberately "how should things be?" (Denyer et al., 2008:394). In this context this means providing practitioners, particularly those in Ochre Inc., with a "template for the creation of solutions for a particular class of field problems" (Denyer et al., 2008:395). Here that means a *techne* contribution to assist in understanding how LMs are influencing FLE outcomes so that they can determine courses of action through which to influence. The design proposition presented is based on CIMO-logic. This will take the academic theory related findings, outlined above, the *theora*, and present a model based on a critical realist ontological perspective and derived from the logical construction that causation, in a particular class of problematic contexts, arises through the use of an identified intervention type(s) which will invoke generative mechanisms which will deliver defined outcomes (Denyer et al., 2008:396).

On completion of the thesis examination process this will be presented to Ochre Inc. with the agreed purpose of using this model to conduct further quantitative research, based on this model, to test and further refine the knowledge presented in this thesis from descriptive to prescriptive theory. This further activity, if sustained following the doctoral process by the researcher, can help contribute towards the practice of a continued cycle of theory building and theory testing (Denyer et al., 2008:396; Christensen & Carlile, 2009; Rousseau, 2012; Van Aken and Berends, 2012).

The study suggested that LMs use their people management discretion in a number of ways. This involves LM discretionary interventions that are comprised of a number of groupings of discretionary practices which are outlined above in detail. Theory on the generative mechanisms which LMs have invoked, triggered or induced through the interventions of their discretionary practices, in the context of the study, have been developed. This is presented conceptually in Figure 43.

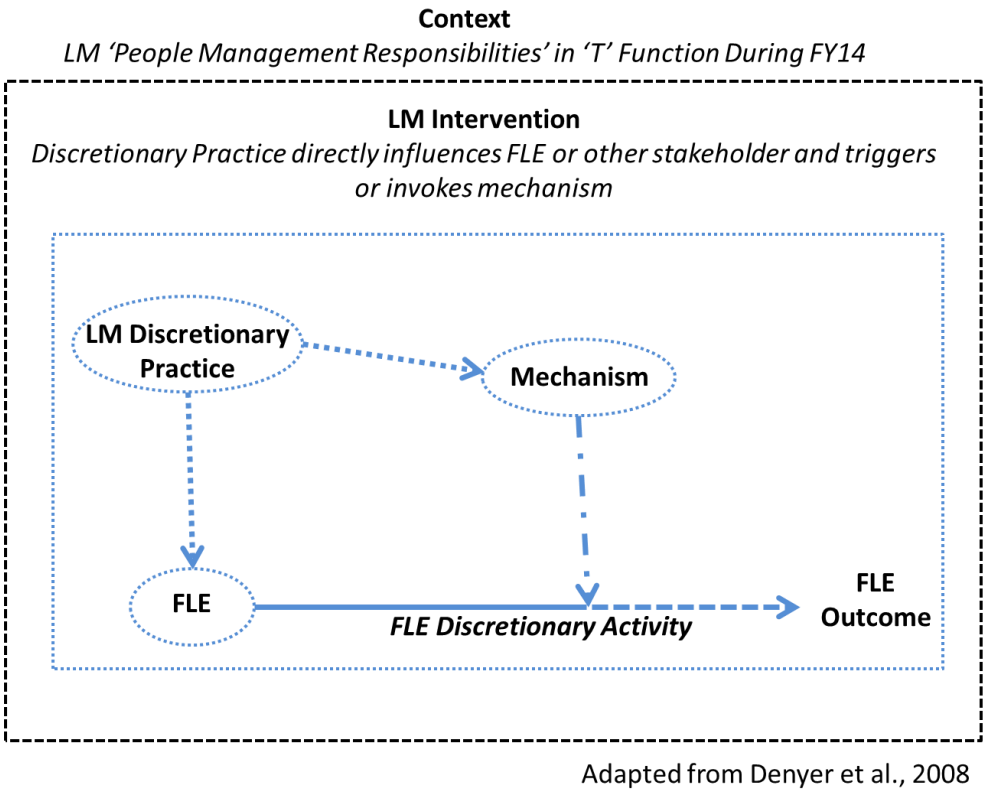

Figure 43 LM People Management CIMO-Logic Model of Discretionary Influence Via Generative Mechanisms from Denyer et al., 2008

These, for each grouping of discretionary practices, will now be presented in turn. Each table illustrates mechanisms of the type to be developed through further examination and theorisation. These are context-specific and explanatory of how LMs' discretionary practices influence individual FLE discretionary activity and therefore the FLE performance outcomes which are produced (Rousseau, 2012). Therefore, those proved here are not intended to be predictive; instead, they offer a design proposition which will help in taking these findings back to Ochre Inc. and show where more work is needed in order to more fully explain how, in this context LM discretionary practices are understood to have influenced FLE discretionary activity. These design propositions possess pragmatic validity, meaning they will require research and testing to develop further the mechanisms presented here. Permission to carry out these next steps has already been given by Ochre Inc.

7.3.1 Produces Team Contextualisation Mechanisms: Designed Endeavour

The types of mechanism presented, and which will require further understanding for this design proposition to have more than pragmatic validity, are those which relate to the discretionary intervention grouping of discretionary practices, *produces team contextualisation*, and are presented here in the form of the design proposition (Denyer et al., 2008) *designed endeavour*. *Designed endeavour* reflects the understanding that LMs' considerations of their context in FY14 led to them make changes to the various discretionary practices which were used by them in the study. This understanding is presented in Table 38.

Table 38 Produces Team Contextualisation Mechanisms – Designed Endeavour

People Management LM Discretion	LM Discretionary Interventions		'Designed Endeavour' Mechanisms
	LM Discretionary Practice Groupings	LM Discretionary Practice Clusters	
Produces Team Contextualisation	Designing Directed Endeavour	Establishing aims, priorities and needs	Evaluating the context for implications on how FLE level performance outcomes would need to be achieved through FLE discretionary activity likely to lead to individual performance outcomes being reached
	Designing Social Endeavour	Sets standards and expectations	Considering the context, defines standards of operation that will support FLEs carrying out their discretionary activity likely to lead to individual performance outcomes being reached
		Define required team dynamic	Considering the context, defines group dynamic within own team that will support FLEs carrying out their discretionary activity likely to lead to individual performance outcomes being reached
	Designing Capability for Endeavour	Define team and individual capability needed	Considering the context, defines skills, attitudes and abilities needed by FLEs for them to carry out their discretionary activity likely to lead to individual performance outcomes being reached
		Incorporates considerations of FLE development needed	Considering the context, determines how gaps in skills, attitudes and abilities of FLEs will be closed for them to carry out their discretionary activity likely to lead to individual performance outcomes being reached

7.3.2 Cultivates Team Environment Mechanisms – Socialised Endeavour

The types of mechanisms presented and which will require further understanding for this design proposition to have more than pragmatic validity, relate to the discretionary intervention grouping of discretionary practices, *cultivates team environment*, and are presented here in the form of the design proposition (Denyer et al., 2008) *socialised endeavour*. *Social endeavour* describes the mechanisms that the LM discretionary practices are thought to have triggered or invoked and which subsequently influenced FLE discretionary activity through the way FLEs worked with each other and the LM within their LM's team environment.

This understanding is presented in Table 39.

Table 39 Cultivates Team Environment Mechanisms – Socialised Endeavour

People Management LM Discretion	LM Discretionary Interventions		'Socialised Endeavour' Mechanisms
	LM Discretionary Practice Groupings	LM Discretionary Practice Clusters	
Cultivates Team Environment	Influencing the Dynamic within the Group	Team building	Creates team social conditions that will encourage FLE discretionary activity likely to lead to individual performance outcomes being achieved
		Creating a 'safe' space	Creates social conditions where impediments to FLE discretionary activity likely to lead to individual performance outcomes being achieved are quickly identified
		Encouraging team to problem solve	Creates social conditions where impediments to FLE discretionary activity likely to lead to individual performance outcomes being achieved are resolved by the group
	Influencing the Dynamic between LM and Individuals	Maintaining individual motivation	Creates social conditions that will generate and sustain FLE motivation likely to lead to individual performance outcomes being achieved
		Being available for FLEs	Creates social conditions where impediments to FLE discretionary activity likely to lead to individual performance outcomes being achieved are shared with the LM so they can be resolved
		Relationships with FLEs	Creates social conditions where FLE discretionary activity likely to lead to individual performance being achieved is encouraged
	Influencing the Dynamic between LM and Overall Group	Building credibility	Creates social conditions where FLE discretionary activity likely to lead to individual performance outcomes being achieved is encouraged
		Protecting from external pressure	Protects FLE social conditions from external influences which could risk FLEs carrying out discretionary activity likely to lead to individual performance outcomes being achieved

7.3.3 Shapes FLE Focus Mechanisms – Directed Endeavour

The types of mechanisms presented and which will require further understanding for this design proposition to have more than pragmatic validity relate to the discretionary intervention grouping of discretionary practices, *shapes FLE focus*, and are presented here in the form of the design proposition (Denyer et al., 2008) *directed endeavour*. *Directed endeavour* describes the mechanisms that the LM discretionary practices are thought to have triggered or invoked and which subsequently influenced FLE discretionary activity in scoping and developing cross functional value creation deals.

This understanding is presented in Table 40.

Table 40 Shapes FLE Focus Mechanism - Directed Endeavour

People Management LM Discretion	LM Interventions		'Directed Endeavour' Mechanisms
	LM Discretionary Practice Groupings	LM Discretionary Practice Clusters	
Shapes FLE Focus	Prioritisation Management	Setting priorities	Help FLE identify and choose the types of opportunities and activities likely to lead to individual performance outcomes being achieved
		Encouraging long term and pragmatic thinking	Help FLE manage stresses and tensions that affect their judgment on which opportunities and activities they should pursue to those most likely to lead to better individual performance outcomes being achieved
	Focusing FLE Activity Management	Helping FLE time management	Help FLE make choices and so manage discretionary activity more likely to lead to individual performance outcomes being achieved
		Monitoring FLE activity	Help FLE maintain discretionary activity more likely to lead to individual performance outcomes being achieved

7.3.4 Develops FLE Ecosystem Mechanisms – Networked Endeavour

The mechanisms presented here are those which relate to the discretionary intervention grouping of discretionary practices, *develops FLE ecosystem*, and are presented here in the form of the design proposition (Denyer et al., 2008) *networked endeavour*. *Networked endeavour* describes the mechanisms that the LM discretionary practices are thought to have triggered or invoked which subsequently influenced FLE discretionary activity when developing internal and external networks understood as important when developing cross functional value creation deals within matrix teams. This is also

understood to include some LMs in the study influencing FLEs from other teams who were associated with their FLEs through matrix teams.

This understanding is summarised in Table 41.

Table 41 Develops FLE Ecosystem Mechanisms – Networked Endeavour

People Management Discretion	LM Interventions		'Networked Endeavour' Mechanisms
	Grouped LM Discretionary Practices	LM Discretionary Practices	
Develops FLE Ecosystem	Providing Cross Functional Guidance	Helping manage customers in 'matrix team'	Guiding FLE discretionary activity when interacting with customers within a 'matrix team' be more likely to lead to individual performance outcomes being achieved
		Supporting FLEs internal network building	Guiding FLE discretionary activity when developing 'x-lob' network be more likely to lead to individual performance outcomes being achieved
		Guidance on 'matrix team' working	Guiding FLE discretionary activity when developing social and operational cohesion within a 'matrix team' be more likely to lead to individual performance outcomes being achieved
		Involving 'matrix team' members	Helping FLE discretionary activity when developing social , operational cohesion and capability within a 'matrix team' be more likely to lead to better individual performance outcomes being achieved

7.3.5 Provides FLE Shielding Mechanisms – Protected Endeavour

The types of mechanisms presented and which will require further understanding for this design proposition to have more than pragmatic validity relate to the discretionary intervention grouping of discretionary practices, *provides FLE shielding*, and are presented here in the form of the design proposition (Denyer et al., 2008) *protected endeavour*. *Protected endeavour* describes the mechanisms that the LM discretionary practices are thought to have triggered or invoked which subsequently influenced FLE discretionary activity when influencing how FLEs used their discretion to influence other stakeholders in order to help or protect the discretionary activities of their FLEs.

This understanding is summarised in Table 42.

Table 42 Provides FLE Shielding – Protected Endeavour

People Management LM Discretion	LM Interventions		'Protected Endeavour' Mechanisms
	LM Discretionary Practice Groupings	LM Discretionary Practice Clusters	
Provides FLE Shielding	Shadowing Deals	Influencing LMs or other FLEs	Protects FLE from external influences which could impede FLEs carrying out discretionary activity likely to lead to individual performance outcomes being achieved
		Protecting FLE allocations	Protects FLE from external influences which could impede FLEs carrying out discretionary activity likely to lead to individual performance outcomes being achieved
	Influencing Upwards	'Sandbagging'/hiding information from senior managers	Protects FLE from external influences which could impede FLEs carrying out discretionary activity likely to lead to individual performance outcomes being achieved
		Relationship between LM and direct superior	Helps protect FLE from external influences which could impede FLEs carrying out discretionary activity likely to lead to individual performance outcomes being achieved

Finally, the types of mechanism presented, and which will require further understanding for this design proposition to have more than pragmatic validity which LMs are understood to have invoked or triggered through their discretionary interventions, and which explain how the discretionary practices influenced FLE discretionary activity within this context, are presented in the form of a design proposition (Denyer et al., 2008; Van Aken & Berends, 2012), and presented conceptually in Figure 44.

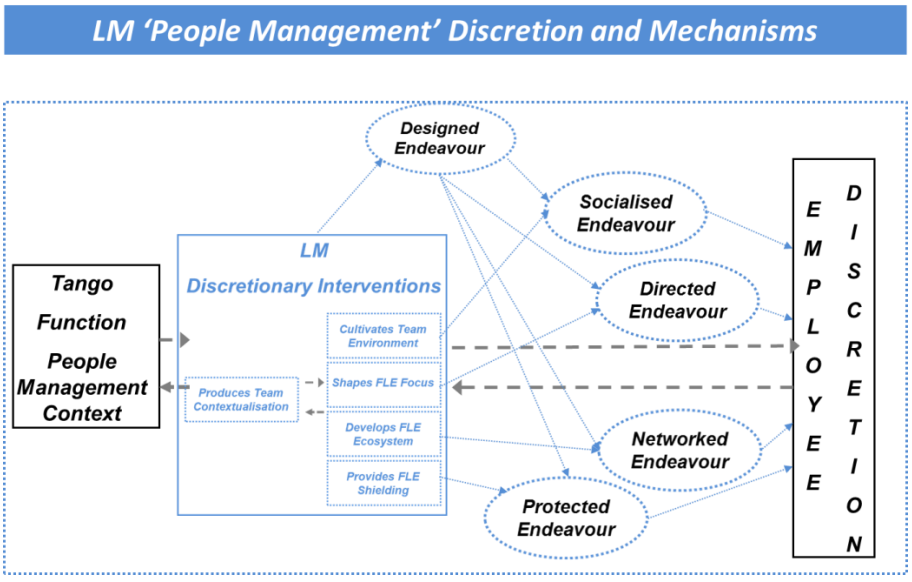

Figure 44 People Management LM Discretion Design Proposition

7.4 Closing Discussion and Overall Conclusions

In this chapter I have set out the findings from the study carried out to address the research question, "How have LMs used their people management discretion to influence individual FLE performance outcomes?" I also addressed the sub research question "How are LMs using their people management discretion in the enactment of HRM practices?" These findings have been analysed and discussed against the extant literature, the contribution to academic theory conclusions, the *theora*, and how they can be used by Ochre Inc. in practice, the *techne* conclusions. In this section I will provide an overall evaluation of the findings.

To meet their people management responsibilities, working within the conceptual 'black box' which is understood to sit between an organisational HRM system and the performance outcomes of individual FLEs, the LMs in tango function were found to use five different types of people management discretionary interventions, groupings of thematically related discretionary practices, through which they are understood to have influenced the discretionary activity of FLEs in their teams. These were *produces team contextualisation, cultivates team environment, shapes FLE focus, develops FLE ecosystem,* and *provides FLE shielding.* LMs were also found to use five different types of discretionary enactment, (*literal enactment, earnest enactment, creative enactment, interrupted enactment* and *instructed enactment*) for carrying out the four HRM practices, namely the APR, the PIP, the TRB and the PRB, for which they held responsibilities and which were intended by Ochre Inc. to support FLE performance outcomes.

Differences in FLE outcomes are understood to have arisen because of differences between LMs over which non-HRM discretionary interventions they carried out. All LMs carried out the discretionary interventions (*produces team contextualisation, cultivates team environment, shapes FLE focus),* with some minor variations between LMs. However, it was mostly the LMs of teams with above average numbers of FLEs in them, who achieved their individual performance targets and were found to have carried out most of the discretionary practices found, particularly *develops FLE ecosystem* and *provides FLE shielding*, who were more likely to be managing a team with a greater number of FLEs who achieved their target than those who did not. This study was not

designed to explain why LMs used their people management discretion in the different ways found; however, the study did find that these discretionary interventions were understood to have been related to reported failings in the HRM practices involved in FLE reward and which discouraged FLEs working in a collegiate way within cross functional matrix teams in pursuit of value creation deals, which is a more detailed description than offered previously in the literature by Purcell et al. (2003), Purcell and Hutchinson (2007:3) of what constitutes people management discretionary "leadership behaviours".

Nehles et al.'s (2006), updated by Guest and Bos-Nehles (2013), taxonomy of five factors, which categorises determinants of LM discretionary enactment of HRM practices, was used to examine the findings on LM HRM practice discretionary enactment. This suggested that LMs in the study differed in their motivation towards particular HRM practices but even when not motivated still used their discretion to apply professional diligence or, in a number of cases, either enthusiasm or innovative ingenuity, to carry them out if they agreed with the intention of the HRM practice. LMs appeared to have both the capacity and ability for carrying out their HRM practice responsibilities, which was potentially attributed to the experience of those in the study and the "dot.com" system in Ochre Inc., which was designed to reduce bureaucracy, and potentially helped maintain clarity of the processes and procedures. Where problems did exist, the LMs of the above average teams were understood to use their non-HRM discretion to work around these.

Finally, the LMs held a productive relationship with the HRMBP who is understood to have allowed, and in some cases encouraged, innovative approaches in how LMs carried out their discretionary enactment. This presented a comparatively more collaborative, if not always perfect, interface between LMs in the study, the HRM function and the HRM practice responsibilities, though this did not meant that the LMs were vocally supportive of their HRM function or those within it; however, the finding is that the rhetoric was more negative than the understood reality. In addition to this, the LMs in the study's non-HRM discretionary interventions are understood to have been supporting the aims of the HRM practices and the HRM function. In short, most of the LMs in the study did not describe this aspect of how they used their people management

discretion as someone else's problem, such as "HRM"'. Instead the overwhelming understanding is that most of the LMs in the study viewed these types of challenges as *their* problem.

Within the study, those who carried these out with diligently, *literal enactment*, or with enthusiasm, *earnest enactment*, were distributed throughout the above and below average LMs in the study. However, all of those who deliberately deviated from the formal HRM practice approach, as they did not believe this was the only way they could make the HRM practice effective, typically with the approval and support of the HRMBP, were among the above average group of LMs and more likely to be those who used their non-HRM practice discretion to carry out the groupings of discretionary practices named *develops FLE ecosystem* and *provides FLE shielding*. Appelbaum et al.'s (2000) AMO theory, using definitions developed by Purcell et al. (2003) and Paauwe et al. (2013) for the *black box* context, was used to examine these findings for the non-HRM LM discretionary interventions and suggested that while providing the operational support expected from the literature (McGovern et al., 1997; Truss, 2001: Purcell et al., 2003; Renwick, 2003; Wright & Nishii, 2007; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Harney, 2008; Farndale & Kelliher, 2013), that LMs' non-HRM discretionary practices were also understood to be deliberately influencing the ability, motivation and opportunities of FLEs in the study – though both these HRM practice discretionary enactments appear from this study to have had an important contribution to explaining FLE influence on the individual FLE achievements of those studied and the discretionary activity understood to have been carried out by them to achieve this.

Wright and Nishii's (2013) 'intended vs. enacted' model was used to examine HRM practice discretionary enactment, particularly the LM and FLE dyad. What was found, potentially through the introduction of cross functional matrix team working in pursuit of value creation deals, was a complex and challenging environment. Therefore, this finding affects how the LM/FLE dyad presented in the literature is understood to operate with both LMs and FLEs understood to be influencing, and to be influenced by, those inside and outside their direct teams in ways likely to influence their ability, motivation and opportunity. This meant that the prevailing model being used in the leadership to explore the dyad model, Graen & Uhl-Bien's (1995:237) 7 point scale

from LMX theory used to determine aspects of the LM and FLE relationship, was found to have limited utility in exploring further the findings on LM people management discretion identified in this study. This applied to LM and FLE dyads but also in the complex multi-dimensional interdependencies identified in the cross functional and matrix working environment of the study, meaning that other leadership theories may be a more appropriate way to explore this further.

The literature review found that just as the literature was unclear on LM people management discretion, it was also unclear on what it is to be an LM of FLEs. Hales (2005:496) stated that a "limited number" of LMs had shifted from being defined through discretionary practices of "supervision" to the description "business management". Ladkin (2010:28) argues that, regardless of the context, leadership is defined by having a "common" feature: "collective mobilization towards an explicit or implicitly determined purpose". It is argued that from the evidence found in the study that a small number of those in the study conform to that definition and, despite the challenges of the new ways of working in tango function and Ochre Inc. during the period in which the case study investigated, were able to marshal themselves and those around them towards the purpose of achieving success in a complex and challenging environment. And I include the HRMBP and several FLEs, as well as a small number of the LMs I met, in that group.

Which in conclusion meant *that how LMs in the study used their people management discretion to influence individual FLE performance outcomes* is understood to have meant using their non-HRM people management discretionary practices to ascertain their environment, adjust the conditions that they and their teams of FLEs were facing, and from this make adjustments to how they used their people management discretion based on these prevailing contextual matters. Having made that initial design choice, they then deployed their team and the FLEs within it, cognisant of the strengths but also the weaknesses in their teams and how these would require to be developed. They directed their FLEs in ways that helped the FLEs use their own discretion to determine and pursue the most advantageous opportunities. As the FLEs carried out their own discretionary activity, the LMs worked with them to develop the abilities, motivation of and the opportunities for their FLEs. This was mostly done through direct influence on

the FLEs but sometimes it was done by influencing the environment around them to defend their FLEs' freedom to use their own discretionary activity in ways that were most likely to achieve their performance objectives.

Further, this meant that what was found in the study on *how LMs used their using their people management discretion in the enactment of HRM practices* was, contrary to the consensus in the literature, understood to have meant few outwards signs of a dichotomous perspective towards their twin people management responsibilities of employee performance and HRM practices. LMs were understood to have disliked some of the qualities of HRM practices, but when the LMs agreed with the intention that was not found to be related to how these were carried out. Instead what emerged was LMs using their HRM practices alongside their non-HRM discretionary practices, typically professionally, sometimes enthusiastically and occasionally innovatively. The more successful LMs were found to use their non-HRM discretionary practices to address perceived deficiencies in the former. Therefore in this study it was found that LM HRM practice discretionary enactment required to be understood less by how LMs did this in isolation but through understanding how this was done in conjunction with non-HRM discretionary practices to influence how FLEs' discretionary activity was carried out in concert. And it is on this preceding point that this study provides its conclusion: it is how LMs used their people management discretion to adapt to their contextual challenges and then combine their non-HRM discretionary interventions *with* their HRM practice discretionary enactment to influence the discretionary activity of the FLEs in their teams, which explains how they influenced individual FLE performance outcomes of the FLEs in this study.

The next and final chapter (Chapter 8) summarises these findings in the context of the research problem and outlines the claimed contributions that are made by this study, as well as implications for practice. Then the acknowledged limitations of this research are outlined, as are suggested ideas for future or further research.

8 Conclusion

Within this chapter I conclude the study, framing the findings in relation to the research problem and research question. I also outline the contributions made, areas where I think further research would be useful and the acknowledged limitations from the approaches I have taken. I conclude with my personal reflections on the doctoral journey undertaken. Within section 8.1 I explain briefly how I arrived at the research question presented at the end of the literature review; in section 8.2 I present the contribution; in section 8.3 I outline the acknowledged limitations of the study; and, in section 8.4 I offer my personal reflections.

8.1 The Research Problem

As a consultant I could see first-hand the difference that LMs of FLEs, especially in the way they used their discretion, were making to the results and value they created in organisations. I also noticed an obvious tension between LMs and the HRMBPs in organisations. Finding little professional appetite for answers, I turned to the literature to help address this problem and found the source of some of that tension: the devolution to LMs of HRM responsibilities. A desire to have the skills to become involved in addressing this problem led me to commence my DBA in 2007. Becker et al. (2005, 2009) highlighted that the impact made by FLMs is often overlooked in leadership, management and strategic HRM thinking, yet these FLEs are often the ones who generate the most value and produce organisational performance. Going further Becker et al. (2005:3) add that when this is the case, through the exercise of their discretion, these are "the most highly skilled, hardest-working employees, exercising the most responsibility and operating in the most challenging environments". Paauwe et al. (2013:1) state that the way LMs use their discretion is of equal importance for those in the HRM function, since the HRM department "has long sought to convince others of its value". As the academic literature from studies on how HRM produces value in organisations shifts from performance outcomes (Arthur, 1994; Huselid, 1995; MacDuffie, 1995; Boselie, 2009) to examining how HRM practices affect FLE levelled outcomes inside what is referred to as the 'black box' (Paauwe et al., 2013:79), LMs and their use of discretion have been identified as playing a central position in the translation of an intended to an enacted HRM practice with the resultant effect of

influencing FLEs (McGovern et al., 1997; Truss, 2001; Wright, 2001b; Purcell et al., 2003; Hope-Hailey et al., 2005; Paauwe & Boselie, 2005a; Guest, 2011; Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Brewster et al., 2013). This problem is therefore of strategic importance as well as importance in resolving tensions between LMs and HRMBPs.

There are gaps in the literature on how LMs' use of the people management discretion, a term introduced to describe the combination of HRM practice responsibilities and discretionary enactment alongside "leadership behaviours" (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007:3), influences FLE performance outcomes, especially from studies where multi-level and multi-stakeholder perspectives are sought (Wright & Nishii, 2013:90). Only a small number of studies have examined LM non-HRM practice enactment discretion in concert with HRM practice discretionary enactment effects on FLEs (Alfes et al., 2013a,b; Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Farndale & Kelliher; 2013; Paauwe et al., 2013). Only Purcell et al. (2003) and Purcell and Hutchinson (2007) have included actual performance data rather than self-reported measures that indicate likely FLE performance outcomes, but these were at a department performance level and not designed to identify LM people management discretionary practices, the effects these had on FLE discretionary activity, or how this could explain the variations in performance that people management discretion is understood to have. Harney & Jordan (2008) developed their study and identified that the twin responsibilities of people management were not irreconcilable but, again, their design did not allow the isolation of LM people management discretionary practices. A gap remained on the "crucial" part played by LMs of FLEs.

Following the literature review outlined in Chapter 2, I wanted to conduct a study to build on the work of Purcell et al. (2003), Purcell and Hutchinson (2007) and informed by Harney & Jordan (2008), in order to investigate in more depth how LMs use their people management discretion to influence individual FLE performance outcomes, leading to the following research question.

How do LMs use their people management discretion to influence individual first line employee performance outcomes?

To aid and guide the study I also proposed the following sub question:

How do LMs use their people management discretion when enacting HRM practices?

8.2 Contribution

8.2.1 Contribution to Knowledge – Academic Theory

In investigating the specific questions raised in the research, I have been able to develop a more detailed understanding of how LMs are using their people management discretion to influence individual FLE performance outcomes. This builds on the work of Purcell et al. (2003), Purcell & Hutchinson (2007), Harney & Jordan (2008) in exploring LM discretionary practices and the influence these have on FLEs. It also extends the theory developed by them in a number of important ways. *Firstly* I have included actual individual FLE performance outcome data and developed an explanation from LMs and FLEs in order to explain how this performance outcome was achieved. *Secondly*, like the previous small body of work examining LM people management discretion based on the people and performance model, I include data from multiple levels and sources, including LMs, FLEs and HRMBPs. However, unlike previous studies, the main interviews were the dyadic pairings of LMs and the FLEs who achieved the known performance outcomes. *Thirdly*, unlike previous studies, I explore in depth LM non-HRM discretionary practices and FLE discretionary activity, as well as LM HRM practice enactment. *Fourthly* and finally my work also contributes to a methodological gap present in the literature identified by Boselie et al. (2005) then Boselie (2009), Wright & Haggerty (2005), Fleetwood & Hesketh (2006) Purcell & Boxall (2008), Paauwe (2009), Brewster et al. (2013) and latterly Harley (2015); all of which means that within the HRM-P 'black box' literature this is understood to be the only study examining LM people management discretion, using the theoretical constructs of the people and performance model, to have addressed these specific research questions and to have used this methodological approach.

My findings make contributions related to my research questions and how they related to the HRM-P literature, therefore the contributions will be mostly from within this discussion.

8.2.1.1 Primary Contributions

The literature has mainly examined LMs' discretion through the lens of HRM practice enactment. By contrast this study has examined how LMs used their non-HRM discretion interventions through the discretionary practices that were used, and in addition to that how they used their discretion for HRM practice enactment. This different approach is therefore likely to offer differing findings. The literature also led to an expectation for LM people management discretion to be of a supervisory style and manner, with little consideration for contextual matters as "no evidence has been found" that LMs of FLEs have shifted from "supervision to team leadership/co-ordination or business management" (Hales, 2005:496).

My first area of contribution to academic theory comes from my study building on the findings and theory of Purcell and Hutchinson (2007:3) that LMs have people management "leadership behaviours" and providing an extension to theory through contributing an updated and more detailed outline of the discretionary practices first identified in the people and performance model by Purcell et al. (2003:39) and updated in Boxall & Purcell (2008). This shows the ways LMs use their people management discretion to influence the discretionary activities of their FLEs, taking into account the contextual matters they are dealing with and the operational and developmental aspects of their teams of FLEs. This is presented conceptually in Figure 45.

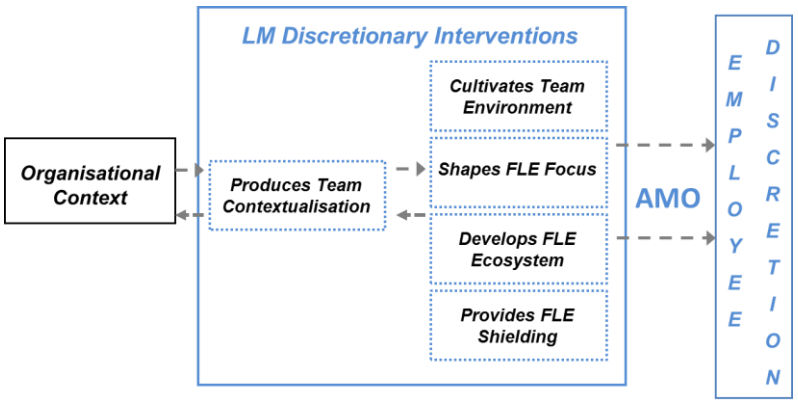

Figure 45 LM People Management Non-HRM Practice Discretion

This model of LM discretionary interventions is accompanied by a supporting in depth taxonomy, which categorises in rich detail the LM people management discretionary

interventions which are comprised of thematically linked groupings and clusters of LM discretionary practices, to further extend existing theory.

These findings have helped to develop further Purcell et al.'s (2003) and Purcell & Hutchinson's (2007:3) by developing our appreciation of the ways LMs use people management discretionary practices, and which moves our understanding beyond the description of "leadership behaviours" which influence "employee attitudes towards their job and their organisation" (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007:4). Understanding non-HRM LM discretionary practices such as these helps inform how within the five categories of challenges which LMs deal with when conducting their people management discretion, there remains a lack of clarity within the literature on how LMs simultaneously manage these challenges while influencing FLE performance outcomes and so better understand how this influence might be happening in practice Bos-Nehles et al. (2013).

The summary of this taxonomy is in Table 43.

Table 43 Taxonomy of LM People Discretionary Practices

LM Non-HRM Discretionary Interventions	Groupings of Clusters	LM Discretionary Practice Clusters
Produces Team Contextualisation	Designing Directed Endeavour	Establishing aims, priorities and needs
	Designing Social Endeavour	Sets standards and expectations
		Defines required team dynamic
	Designing Capability for Endeavour	Defines team capability needed
		Incorporates considerations of FLE development
Cultivates Team Environment	Influencing the Dynamic within the Group	Team building
		Creating a 'safe' space
		Encouraging team to problem solve
	Influencing the Dynamic between LM and Individual FLEs	Maintaining individual motivation
		Being available for FLEs
		Relationships with FLEs
	Influencing the Dynamic between LM and Overall Group	Building credibility
		Protecting from external pressure
Shapes FLE Focus	Prioritisation Management	Setting priorities
		Encouraging long term thinking but pragmatic thinking
	Focusing FLE Activity Management	Helping FLE time management
		Monitoring FLE activity
Develops FLE Ecosystem	Providing Cross Functional Guidance	Helping manage customers in a matrix team
		Supporting FLEs' internal network building
		Guidance on 'matrix team' working
		Involving 'matrix team' members
Provides FLE Shielding	Shadowing Deals	Influencing LMs or other FLEs
		Protecting FLE allocations
	Influencing Upwards	'Sandbagging' (hiding) information from senior managers to protect FLEs
		Relationship management between LM and direct superior

As well as being identified, how these discretionary practices are understood to have influenced FLE discretionary activity and their individual performance outcomes has also been established by comparing and contrasting of the identified LM discretionary practices with FLE descriptions of their discretionary activities and known variations of actual performance results. Comparing the identified LM discretionary practices with the individual performance outcomes produced by FLEs, my results help explain differences between LMs in how they carried out their people management discretion related to differences in the discretionary activity of FLEs and used by their FLEs to develop and secure value creation deals from their customers. This helps bring further understanding on how changes made to LM discretionary practices (Purcell and Hutchinson, 2007) can have an impact on FLE discretionary activity. This is suggested to provide richer and more pertinent insight than exploring people management discretion by the use extrinsic models of leadership and the use of proxy measures which are indicative of FLE performance.

Examining the identified LM discretionary interventions for their relationship with Paauwe et al.'s (2013) definitions of Appelbaum et al.'s (2000) AMO theory, the currently most used theoretical model for connecting the HRM system, via HRM practices and their enactment to employee level outcomes through understood influence on their discretion, resulted in relationships being found between non-HRM related LM discretionary interventions found in the study and the influence these are understood to have on FLEs through the effect on their ability, motivation and opportunities. This extends further the work done by Bos-Nehles et al. (2013) in using AMO theory to examine the discretionary practices of LMs. That study used AMO theory as part of a data gathering framework to compare populations of LMs' perceptions with those of directly related, but unable to be compared, FLEs. This study differed by using AMO theory examine a defined and already identified taxonomy of discretionary practices which were developed from the connected accounts of LM and their direct FLEs within a single context and related to known FLE performance outcomes.

This examination has made a contribution through extension of theory by identifying a number of ways that LMs, through their people management non-HRM discretionary practices, were understood to be influencing the ability and motivation of their direct

report FLEs in ways that suggest that non-HRM LM discretion may be influencing FLEs directly in HRM related ways than solely the way they use their discretion to enact HRM practices, supporting those such as Wall & Wood (2005) and more recently Harley (2015) and Boxall et al. (2016) who have called for more research into the complexities of how HRM systems are influencing FLEs.

The contribution through the extension of existing theory that LMs are understood to be using their non-HRM discretion to be influencing FLEs in ways that are understood from the literature to be related to the intent of the HRM system (Boselie et al., 2005; Wright & Nishii, 2007; Alfes et al., 2013b; Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Guest and Bos-Nehles, 2013), but which sit separately from HRM practices, and are understood to possess a possible relationship with individual FLE performance outcomes (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Harney & Jordan, 2008), also supports Truss' (2001:1146) call for a disaggregated approach to understanding FLE performance and the resultant effect the HRM system and the HRM practices that are within it, and in this case the LMs, are having on FLEs in studies exploring the 'black box'.

The 'black box' literature appears focused on the LM and FLE dyad as the key interface of HRM practice enactment (Wright & Nishii, 2013). Wright & Nishii (2013:92) argue that FLEs react "in some way, based on the perceived HR practices" which are enacted within this dyad. My study has found that as well as the LM being understood to be influencing the ability, motivation and opportunity of FLEs through non-HRM related discretionary practices, the FLEs in the study were also being actively encouraged by some LMs to influence the ability, motivation and opportunity of each other. Further LMs from other teams were found to be influencing the FLEs in other teams, and LMs in the study were influencing FLEs in other teams. Some of this was understood to be intended to influence the ability, motivation and opportunity of FLEs. Therefore research suggests that LMs may be deliberately "influencing the attitudes and behaviours" through their "leadership behaviours" (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2003:4) of other FLEs. As Wright & Nishii (2013:93) state, the goal of HRM systems and the HRM practices that make them up, is to lead to "positive attitudinal reactions" of FLEs; yet if FLMs in complex environments such as this, where matrix teams are the norm,

are influencing FLEs in ways similar to the AMO theory intentions of HRM practices and FLEs are in turn being influenced by multiple LMs, this makes unpicking the connection between the HRM practice and the outcome on FLE discretion in this study, as well as any variances in FLE perception of HRM practice in comparable contexts, very difficult to isolate. This study adds to our understanding that in complex environments where matrix teams are the norm, such as found in this study, the dyadic model alone is not necessarily representative of the way HRM practices are being enacted.

My research findings also make a contribution in this area by adding to the empirical examples of workplaces undergoing change in a people management context, as studies where LMs are required to accommodate changes in the workplace from a people management responsibility perspective are extremely rare, with Guest & Bos-Nehles (2013:95) arguing that it is a "seriously under-researched topic". The discretionary practices identified in the study, particularly when these are examined using an AMO theory perspective, provide examples of LMs making considered choices on the ways they use their discretion to interpret and adjust their approaches so they can meet their people management responsibilities differently from the ways the literature has so far found LMs of FLEs doing (McGovern et al., 1997; Hales, 2005; Wright & Nishii, 2013).

My second area of contribution to academic theory comes from my research building on and extending existing academic theory on the people and performance work by Purcell et al. (2003), Purcell and Hutchinson (2007) and Boxall and Purcell (2008), by my research identifying detailed ways that LMs carried out their HRM practices through the forms of discretionary enactment they used. In total, five types of LM discretionary enactment were identified which are presented in the model in Figure 46, also adapted from the 'people and performance model' (Purcell et al., 2003 and updated in Boxall & Purcell, 2008), and separates LM HRM practice discretion into two related but separate acts: "implement" and "enact" (Purcell et al., 2003:38). This adds to our knowledge by building on the descriptions provided by Purcell et al. (2003) and Purcell and Hutchinson (2007).

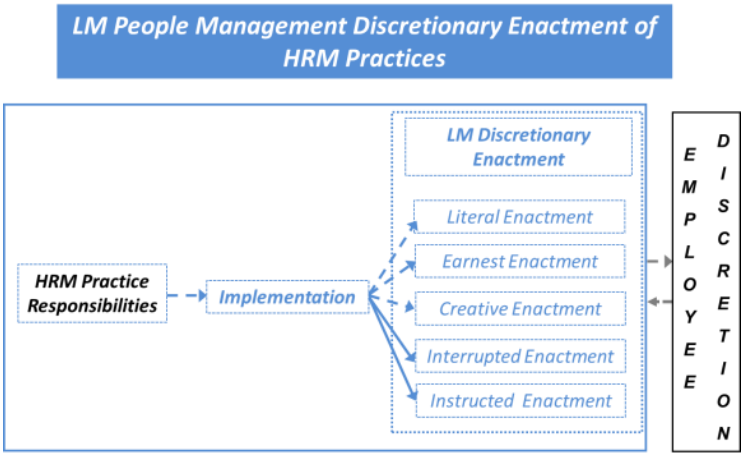

Figure 46 LM People Management HRM Practice Discretion

This also adds further to our understanding of how HRM practices are turned from what is intended to what is enacted (Wright & Nishii, 2013). Of these types, *literal enactment* and *earnest enactment* develop and expand upon in more detail the general descriptions set out by Purcell et al. (2003:39), while *creative enactment* is understood to be more detailed, only found vaguely alluded to in the literature (Boxall and Purcell, 2008), but not explained using examples. *Creative enactment* went beyond LMs being enthusiastic and involved deliberately deviating from the HRM process to ensure the intention of the HRM practice was met.

These are three examples that my study adds and extends existing theory on what it means in practice when LMs offer what Farndale and Kelliher (2013:890) describe as "added value" by adding a detailed description of *literal* and *earnest enactment* and the inclusion of working examples of *creative enactment*, greater details and new insight which is different from what has previously described in detail in the literature (McGovern et al., 1997; Purcell et al., 2003; Hope-Hailey et al., 2005; Nehles et al., 2006; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Boxall & Purcell, 2008:219; Harney & Jordan, 2008; Bos-Nehles, 2010; Alfes et al., 2013a,b; Farndale & Kelliher et al., 2013; Guest & Bos-Nehles, 2013).

My findings for the other two types of discretionary enactment make a contribution to academic theory by extending our understanding of the challenges in organisations of the darker side of HRM practice discretion, where senior LMs were found to bully LMs into carrying out disciplinary proceedings or intrude on legitimate performance

management because they favour the FLE over the LM. My results bring forth defined academic theory and knowledge of these practices which helps inform why FLEs react to their LMs "in some way" Wright & Nishii (2013:92).

My research contributes to and extends existing academic theory by showing that some of the groupings of discretionary interventions were more commonplace among the LMs, while others were more localised around those with more FLEs in their team who were above average. These therefore contribute to how training and development can be directed (McGovern et al., 1997; Cunningham et al., 2004; Hope-Hailey et al., 2005; Nehles et al., 2006; Wright & Nishii, 2007; Farndale & Kelliher, 2013; Guest and Bos-Nehles, 2013).

My results suggested no connection between how an LM carried out their discretionary enactment of an HRM practice and the performance outcomes of their FLEs. In addition, LMs might be complaining about an HRM practice, but this did not seem to relate to how much effort or care the LM applied in using their discretion to enact this practice and instead some of the LMs who were highly critical of HRM practices, when they supported the intention, applied themselves to making it as effective as possible, in some cases with innovative approaches, despite their apparent misgivings. This adds a nuanced appreciation of Bos-Nehles et al.'s (2013) findings. In that study, high levels of motivation were slightly inversely related to how LMs were understood to enact the HRM practice, while ability was found to positively relate to how well the LM would enact the HRM practice. This study adds to acedmic theory in this area by suggesting that motivation levels may reflect how well the LMs appreciate the usefulness of the HRM practice for their context, and therefore the less motivated they are means the more insightful they could be to understand how much extra they may need to do to overcome the inherent weaknesses of a particular practice. This also makes a contribution by adding texture and examples into what an LM applies in a "context-specific and even idiosyncratic way" (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013:873) to their discretionary enactment, as well as a connection between this and individual FLE performance outcomes.

Further, all of this makes a contribution and extends theory by suggesting that LM motivation is more complex and nuanced than the extant literature has identified and

because of this is supportive of caution from interpreting overtly from levels of LM motivation for HRM practice enactment (Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Guest & Bos-Nehles, 2013; Harley, 2015; Boxall et al., 2016).

Finally, my results made a contribution and extended existing theory as it found a new relationship between LMs in the study who used their non-HRM discretionary practices to overcome perceived flaws in HRM practices or the HRM system, such as the reward system, and the actual individual FLE performance outcomes that were achieved by FLEs. Among the LMs in the study, and in particular those in the above average group, variations in enactment were not found because the LMs were understood to view the HRM practices as being "against their interests" (McGovern et al., 1997; Hope-Hailey et al., 2005; Boxall & Purcell, 2008:219), but because they viewed these HRM practices as planned by Ochre Inc.'s HR function as being potential impediments to their FLEs achieving their individual performance outcomes. Further all the LMs in the study were understood to have carried out their HRM practices alongside their non-HRM discretionary practices professionally.

Those above average also carried them out sometimes enthusiastically and occasionally innovatively. These more successful LMs were found to use their non-HRM discretionary practices to address perceived deficiencies in the HRM practices. Therefore, in this study, it is suggested by this study that LM HRM practice discretionary enactment requires to be understood by how HRM practice enactment is done in conjunction with non-HRM discretionary practices to influence how FLEs' discretionary activity, not by analysis of the HRM practice enactment alone. This is because how they are carried out together that reveals how FLE discretion is being influenced. This also supports Truss' (2001:1146) contention that "the informal organization has a key role to play in the HRM process, such that informal practices and norms of behaviour interact with formal HR policies", as it does the claim by Purcell et al. (2003) that LM discretion is not just central but "crucial" if HRM practices are to achieve the FLE performance intended outcomes.

Taken all together, my findings extend existing theory by showing that the LMs in the study were using their people management discretion in ways that were more appropriately understood as being 'enmeshed' rather than 'symbiotic', as has been

described by Purcell and Hutchinson (2007:4), and demonstrated by the approaches taken by others in the field who typically only examine LM non-HRM discretion in the context of how it relates to the effectiveness or outcomes of HRM practice discretionary enactment (Alfes et al., 2013a,b; Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Farndale and Kelliher, 2013). This study suggests that LMs may be having more effects and influence on FLEs through their non-HRM people management discretion, much of which in this study incorporated measures typically associated with HRM rather than LMs. It is important to qualify this perception of the responsibilities held and complexities faced by the LMs in this study, compared to those in the literature as Hales (2005) has warned that this could be an unusual grouping; however, Becker et al. (2005, 2009) suggest the level of complexity faced by LMs in general and found in this study is not as rare as the consensus in the HRM literature suggests.

My third and final contribution to academic theory comes in the form of a methodological contribution based on my choice for the research design, the selection of interviewees and the data collected (Harley, 2015). Purcell et al. (2003) collected data from multiple stakeholders and multiple levels, but using questionnaires and interviews. Some data on performance were gathered but this was solely at a department level and related to employee discretion, but not attributable to individual employees of LMs, and not focusing on uncovering a detailed understanding of how non-HRM practice LM people management discretion was carried out, and how this led to FLE performance outcomes. Purcell and Hutchinson (2007) gathered data at the departmental level only, and used department performance level data and employee attitude surveys to deduce perceptions of LM people management discretion and how this was understood to relate to department level performance. However, this was survey based and did not explore LM non-HRM practices and how LMs were using this to influence individual FLE discretion and performance outcomes. Alfes et al. (2013b) gathered employee level perceptions of LM behaviour during HRM practice enactment, perceptions of HRM practices and proxy measures (employee engagement) as predictors of FLE performance, and used deduction from these models to deduce their findings. Therefore no actual performance data was used and only a single level was examined, though LM non-HRM discretion was examined, but done so using non exploratory methods, LMX Theory (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Alfes et al. (2013a) used similar methods to connect

HRM practice discretionary enactment as a proxy which indicated likely FLE performance outcomes, but did not explore the LM people management discretion in detail as it was only a single level respondent study. Bos-Nehles et al. (2013) like Purcell et al. (2003) used multiple level analysis and AMO theory to explore LM HRM enactment discretion, but were not able to connect these to actual performance data, used a questionnaire approach and relied on proxy measures as indicators of likely FLE performance (HRM practice enactment effectiveness). Finally Farndale and Kelliher (2013) used multiple level analysis and questionnaires to uncover relationships between FLE commitment as an indicator of FLE performance with LM HRM practice enactment.

By contrast to these approaches the design in this study used multiple levels of analysis like Purcell et al. (2003), Bos-Nehles et al. (2013) and Farndale and Kelliher (2013), but unlike Bos-Nehles et al. (2013) and Farndale and Kelliher (2013) used exploratory methods, while Purcell et al. (2003), used mixed methods. My multiple level data were set within from connected FLEs and LMs. Bos-Nehles et al. (2013) used these pairings but was not able to connect the data from LMs with FLEs. Purcell et al. (2003) only collected LM and FLE data at the department level. Therefore my study have been the only one found in the people and performance literature examining LM HRM people management discretion using multiple level analysis and including dyadic pairs of LMs and FLEs. Further I included, like Purcell et al. (2003) and Purcell and Hutchinson (2007), HRMBPs in my data set, and like these studies also used these interviews to examine emergent findings. But going further than either study, as well as the others I have cited in this section, my data gathering strategy was exploratory and included actual individual FLE performance output data. These qualities make the study design in itself a contribution.

My approach was taken based on my understanding of the requirements of the study, chosen as it would help determine how people management discretion was "actually used by a manager and their subordinates" (Paauwe et al., 2013:9). But my approach has been different approach from those of others in this field. This is actively encouraged by some authors, who argue that studies within the HRM-P 'black box' literature require greater methodological pluralism (Fleetwood & Hesketh, 2006) and a

departure from the dominance of the 'social psychology' approach, where quantitative statistical significance is an overused approach (Harley, 2015:404). This supports my presentation of the design and methodological choices as a contribution to the people management 'black box' discussion. Therefore this research design is also offered as the final contribution to academic theory by this thesis.

8.2.1.2 Secondary Contributions

These findings are those which are pertinent to the main body of literature the study has worked from and conducted a discourse with, the HRM-P 'black box' discussion, but which are also located in other literatures, specifically those which are concerned with the discourse on leadership and management.

My findings contributed to the understanding that LMs of FLEs in this study were operating in a more business management style than the literature suggests with some of their non-HRM discretionary practices addressing what are typically HRM related matters alongside operational matters, which supports the contention of Hales (2005) that LM responsibilities have been growing over time. However, the findings suggest that LMs are also beginning to carry out HRM related acts through their non-HRM discretionary practices, in contrast to previous findings in the literature, which sees LMs' non-HRM discretionary practices and HRM practice discretionary enactment as dichotomous (McGovern et al., 1997) or the result of a choice, such as in Nehles et al. (2006) and Bos-Nehles et al. (2013) where it was found that LMs have a 'desire' to fulfil the HRM practice responsibilities they have but choose to spend their time on other things. Further, this study suggests that as a consequence of the added responsibilities, the way some LMs are using their "agency" or discretion, such as those in the study, are doing so in a more business management than supervisory approach than previously found (Harris et al., 2002; Gratton & Truss, 2003; Purcell et al., 2003; Hales, 2005; Maxwell & Farquharson, 2007; Becker et al., 2009). This also therefore supports the view of an increasing ambiguity between the people management responsibilities of some FLMs and middle managers (McConville & Holden, 1999; Currie & Procter, 2001; Maxwell & Farquharson, 2007; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Hutchinson & Purcell, 2010).

The study also found that the LMX theory has been used increasingly within the 'black box' literature as a means of exploring the LM and FLE dyad (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Boxall & Purcell, 2008; Sanders et al., 2010; Alfes et al., 2013a), using a 7 point scale to explore the LM and FLE dynamic (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995:237); however, as already shown, the five discretionary practices found in the study can be related to the 7 point LMX theory scale, but in practice they are not an exact match, with much of the nuance important for understanding the meaning about the intention of the practice gleaned from LMs and FLEs within the context of tango function, being at best diluted or at worst lost. Further, LMX theory (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), is modelled on the assumption that "leadership occurs through one-to-one relations between the 'leaders' and individual 'followers'" (Ladkin, 2010:56) which is thought to lead to higher levels of FLE satisfaction (Gerstner & Day, 1997), something which has been used by Alfes et al. (2013a) when investigating LMs and their understood influence on FLEs. However, this was less pertinent to the LM and FLE team environment found in the study and the non-HRM discretionary practices used by LMs, and for the complex multidimensional matrix environment.

This means that for developing further understanding, using models from the leadership and management literature that other models may need to be considered. Found to be relevant to the findings in this study and the people management context are Path Goal Theory (Yukl, 1989), Power and Influence Theory (Raven, 1993), Shared Leadership (Carson et al., 2007) or Distributed Leadership (Spillane, 2006). These relatively new approaches to leadership recognise the social network aspect of leadership and that it emerges from multiple parties, not solely a single leader and follower (Ladkin, 2010), more appropriate to LMs and FLEs operating in an extended network of people working together (Ladkin, 2010:56). A shared or distributed leadership perspective acknowledges that, as well as the interrelationships between LMs and FLEs, there are a number of complex interdependencies which as a result mean leadership can also emerge as a "process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organisational goals or both. This influence process often involves peer, or lateral, influence and at other times involves upward or downward hierarchical influence" (Pearce & Conger, 2003:1).

8.2.1.3 Further Research

This study, developing on from the step initiated by Bos-Nehles et al. (2013), has used AMO theory as a way of examining LM people management discretion. Further work in this interesting and potentially valuable area is recommended. This is because the extent to which LMs were understood to be influencing FLEs through their non-HRM discretionary interventions suggests more research is needed in this area.

Having data on FLE performance allowed the rapid exploration of connections between LM people management discretion and FLE discretionary activity. This meant that conclusions or insights were able to be drawn or, as pertinent, dismissed by having this data to hand. Therefore, where possible, the inclusion of FLE data is suggested as an area which requires more research.

Finally, this study has presented a number of models which offer some additional insights in the case of the HRM discretionary enactment or much more additional insight, such as the model and taxonomy of LM discretionary interventions. Work to develop and refine these models in areas would be beneficial, particularly in developing further our understanding of the overlaps of people management responsibilities. This was carried out within a single small function in a single organisation. Seeking new and different sites to replicate the methodology and continue to develop the models would be a useful starting point for further research.

8.2.2 Contribution to Practice – *Techne*

The design proposition to be presented to Ochre Inc. is set within the context of LMs who manage FLEs selling value creation deals in matrix teams which span cross functional (across lines of business) and these findings are thought to explain the performance outcomes of FY14 achieved by the LMs and FLEs from tango function in the study. In order to move this understanding beyond pragmatic validity, the following actions are required to be taken:

- The non-HRM discretionary interventions, (*produces team contextualisation, cultivates team environment, shapes FLE focus, develops FLE ecosystem,* and *provides FLE shielding*) will need to be developed into quantitative instruments and tested against FLE performance outcome data.

- Further work to develop the mechanisms understood to have influenced FLE discretionary activity.
- Further work to develop a richer understanding and refine the described discretionary interventions is also required. This can be achieved using a mixture of methods both testing the theoretical framework developed and adapting it based on new data.

Ochre Inc. has agreed that this next stage and development of these steps can begin upon completion of the DBA process.

I would add further that, in light of the research problem, which I identified at the outset, regarding the perceived tensions between HRMBPs and LMs, there is an opportunity to utilise the position I hold working in a business school to offer some areas for immediate actions. The most obvious is using the insight provided from the study regarding LM people management discretionary interventions. Work to develop an aide-memoire to help HRMBPs uncover and diagnose how LMs in their organisations are using their non-HRM discretion, based on the five types found in this study, though perhaps after they have been refined and tested for context. This could be done relatively rapidly in Ochre Inc., with other contexts following later.

8.2.3 Contribution to Practice – *Praxis*

During my research apprenticeship, I have used my learning to inform aspects of my working practice throughout the nine years I have been involved in the DBA process. Below is short summary of some of the contributions to *praxis* that I have already made in this time:

- *Literature Review* – The findings from my *literature review* were used in the design of a leadership development programme for a UN agency. The understanding I gained was used to develop a programme where leaders explored and embraced both aspects of their people management responsibilities and discretion. This programme ran for two and a half years, developed nearly 400 country heads and their immediate reports, involved five global regions, and was delivered in English and French languages. The programme was described as cutting edge by the client by being both practical and immediately useful.

- *Methodology* – Learning how to be a critical thinker, the tools involved, the inevitable traps of logic and reasoning that techniques can and cannot protect you from and the rekindling of my respect for the scientific method, all helped me develop a programme for PwC in 2011. This was a programme that they wanted to change how their consultants viewed their clients' problems. In doing this I developed and designed an approach that encouraged consultants to see client problems through three lenses. This was inspired by my then novel appreciation of ontological perspectives and epistemological approaches. The programme is run online and in the classroom and is still run globally by PwC.

8.3 Limitations

The development of humility as a doctoral researcher is understood by me as a necessity. And it means that naturally, as with any study this research has limitations. The ones I am cognisant of I will acknowledge here.

Being a qualitative study, the small size within a single function within a single organisation creates an immediate limitation. This limits statistical generalisability though not automatically analytical or thematic generalisability (Yin, 2014). This limitation was knowingly accepted as a willing compromise deliberately traded off for the possibility of controlling for context which could be explored and understood in order to appreciate the influences on the actors in the study. This thesis has provided a richer understanding of aspects of people management and how LM discretion is undertaken within the theoretical construct of the people and performance model. Though it should be noted that other explanations for the outcomes examined are equally possible, and the design chosen means these possible alternative explanations need acknowledged here. Further the study provides detail of what LMs have done to influence employee performance outcomes. Further research to examine quality aspects such as how this translates to employee performance outcomes and what qualitative understanding, and quality, of LM approach taken is still needed.

However, being within a small population does create the likelihood for higher than normal bias on the part of the interviewees and on the part of the interviewer (Buchanan & Bryman, 2009). Being a smaller study makes bias more likely to be present in the

accounts provided by others for multiple reasons impossible to locate and ameliorate, such as answers provided that are more positive than the interviewer truly felt, or more critical than they behaved or acted (Buchana & Bryman, 2009). The study is further limited by my initially beneficial but also potentially harmful familiarity with the context and culture (Easterby-Smith et al., 2006).

The use of an interview design where I got the interviewee to talk about the unsuccessful and the unusual, while better for exploring the full range of what they carried out in FY14, will have felt unnatural for some who would have preferred to tell me a narrative that was well rehearsed. To accommodate this additional effort for interviewees, I incorporated techniques in the interview design to assist with recall and always allowed the interview to run over. However, any study based on recall of past events is subject to recall error and this study, despite my best efforts is no different in that regard.

The use of AMO theory creates limitations. While it was chosen to help with connecting this study with the extant literature to therefore enhance thematic generalisability, the theory itself can be overtly general in its descriptions and has a lack of demonstrated connection to specific HRM practices (Paauwe et al., 2013).

While I had privileged access, the nature of my interviews meant that I was exploring difficult themes and seeking interviewees' trust so that I was able to get from them the version of events they wanted to share with me. However, by virtue of interviewing LMs and their direct FLEs it was probable that some withheld or adjusted what they shared out of mistrust in my ability to protect them in the process. While I acknowledge this is likely to have happened with some, I was mostly shocked by how open the interviewees were.

Lastly, my data analysis will naturally be subjective and from another's perspective, potentially intuitive, despite my determined efforts to take a methodical and systematic approach. I sought to counter this with a strictly documented coding routine to make my approach as transparent and understandable as possible. However my familiarity with the case study organisation while helpful may also have acted to hinder my judgement and affected my perceived objectivity (Easterby-Smith et al., 2006).

8.4 Obiter Dicta – Personal Reflections

"Science is a way of thinking much more than it is a body of knowledge."

Carl Sagan (1990)

This means that while I value this thesis and the work within it, the activity of completing it was part of a wider 'apprenticeship' of the learning and application of the scientific method in a social scientific setting. In short I now better understand why the *how* of knowledge is more important than the *what.*

This has fused my learned critical thinking methodological development with humility for the process for producing knowledge.

But rather than my own unpoetic words, let me leave the last words in this reflexive text to a much missed candle in the dark:

"The truth may be puzzling. It may take some work to grapple with. It may be counterintuitive. It may contradict deeply held prejudices. It may not be consonant with what we desperately want to be true. But our preferences do not determine what's true. We have a method, and that method helps us to reach not absolute truth, only asymptotic approaches to the truth — never there, just closer and closer, always finding vast new oceans of undiscovered possibilities."

Carl Sagan (1995)

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Appendix A Systematic Review of the Literature

Review Panel

Name	Title	Role/Expertise Area
Dr Clare Kelliher	Senior Lecturer, Cranfield School of Management	Supervisor/Strategic HRM
Prof Emma Parry (New)	Senior Research Fellow	Professor in HRM
Dr Colin Pilbeam (New)	Senior Research Fellow	Organisational Behaviour and Leadership
Professor Andrew Kakabadse (Old)	Professor of International Management Development	Leadership
Dr Donna Ladkin (Old)	Senior Lecturer, Cranfield School of Management & Head of Cohort 2007-2011	Organisational Behaviour and Leadership
Heather Woodfield	Social Sciences Information Specialist	Search strategies, online information sources

Approach Taken to the Systematic Review Searches

Before the Systematic Review (SR) searches could be initiated, the questions that had emerged from the Scoping Study were reviewed by the Panel SR Expert and subsequently revised several times. This was because they lacked the necessary focus or became too broad in scope. The final question set has resulted in the correct focus for the review. Because the terms are thematically very broad, (HRM, Performance, Implementation & LMs are terms that apply to different domains and in many different ways, with many different meanings), it was considered whether these should be narrowed to allow a manageable volume of results. The Panel Library Expert was consulted on this and it was accepted these were the only credible terms that could be used, that could be expected to identify the material required for the standards of a Systematic Review. This is because the majority of material was likely to exist within these thematic areas. This meant that the searches were begun from the outset with the

knowledge that a choice existed as to whether to remove the problems of volume of material and maintaining focus by running very narrow searches and limiting the terms used. However, narrowing the search terms at the outset in this way was recognised as more problematic as this is an emerging area of research in comparison to the wider domains in which it sits debates within the area of focus of the Systematic Review may not be as easily identified or linked. Therefore a search strategy needed to be able to capture as many articles as possible which would need to be identified through analysis of titles and extracts.

Systematic Review Questions

The Systematic Review questions have been designed with the intention of allowing the literature to be interrogated effectively to identify what is and is not known about how LMs implement HRM practices. Further research in this area would help build greater understanding of what it actually is that LMs do within this context and this could help to inform how HRM Practices are designed and executed in a way that adds more consistency to adding value in an organisation.

Therefore, questions that will be asked of the literature domains through a Systematic Review Project were identified initially as:

1) What are the mechanisms by which HRM Practices are implemented that involve LMs?

2) When implementing HRM Practices, what is it that LMs do that leads to changes in employee performance?

3) Which HRM Practices do LMs impact most when they are responsible for implementation?

The original Systematic Review question set was further refined through discussion with the panel Systematic Review expert to become the question set below (31/07/09):

1) What mechanisms have been conceptualised to explain how HRM leads to organisational performance?

2) What is understood about how LMs implement HRM Practices?

3) What effects are LMs believed to have on employee performance when implementing HRM Practices?

4) What mechanisms are used to explain the effects LMs have on employee performance when implementing HRM Practices?

Because the question set would inform the search strategy to identify the primary studies to be included in the Systematic Review, making sure the question set was robust was important. Reviewing the Systematic Review questions that were originally created with this in mind it was recognised that they could result in relevant material being missed. This is because this is a relatively new area of research that could be being viewed within different debates within different domains. Therefore the question set was broadened out, not to extend the scope of the Systematic Review, but to ensure that every chance of uncovering any alternatives to Purcell et al.'s (2003) view of how an HRM Practice is translated into organisational performance had been taken.

One example of this was making changes to ensure that hypothesised mechanisms involving LMs had been adequately identified, to ensure that the Systematic Review searched outside the domains identified in the Scoping Study, as it was conceivable that others had conducted research in different domains that had looked at LMs' implementation of HRM Practices. An additional change to the question set was to take account of the differing use of the term LM. These changes came after discussions with the Systematic Review expert on the Review Panel and with those with experience in developing searches at the Cranfield Campus Library.

However, once the Systematic Review Questions were used to create search strings, the breadth of Question 1 quickly became a problem. The HRM – Performance is vast having been heavily debated for over 15 years. It was recognised that this would need to be refined further to ensure that the findings were manageable within the timeframes of a doctoral research programme, and also to ensure that the focus of study remained on mechanisms that involve LMs, as opposed to other mechanisms that had been conceptualised.

Therefore the question set was again adapted in December 2009 and became the following:

1) What mechanisms have been conceptualised to explain how HRM leads to organisational performance through LM implementation?

2) What is understood about how LMs implement HRM Practices?

3) What effect are LMs believed to have on employee performance when implementing HRM Practices?

4) What mechanisms are used to explain the effects LMs have on employee performance when implementing HRM Practices?

At a meeting in Cranfield (22/03/10) findings based on this question set were shared with the panel. Feedback from the panel suggested that the area of interest would be better served by questions that seek 'how' as opposed to 'what'. Therefore the final Systematic Review questions are as follows:

1) What mechanisms have been conceptualised to explain how HRM leads to organisational performance through LM implementation?

2) How do LMs implement HRM Practices?

3) How do LMs affect employee performance when implementing HRM practices?

4) How is the effect LMs have on employees when implementing HRM Practices explained?

Variations of these questions were used annually to maintain connection with developments in the literature.

Utilising the Systematic Review Question Set and Designing the Review

Therefore the choice was made that the most practical way of credibly demonstrating that all reasonable effort had been made to find all the debate that was, or had taken place, in the Systematic Review focus area was to allow the searches to produce large volumes of articles but use carefully considered selection criteria to determine which of these were or were not relevant. How this has been conceptualised is mapped out in the diagram below. This shows how the Systematic Review was designed and executed to deal with these twin problems. The approach taken has been to allow searches that use broad search terms that can produce large volumes of results and subsequently identify

potentially relevant articles within these with a clear explanation of how they have been screened and selected for initial inclusion.

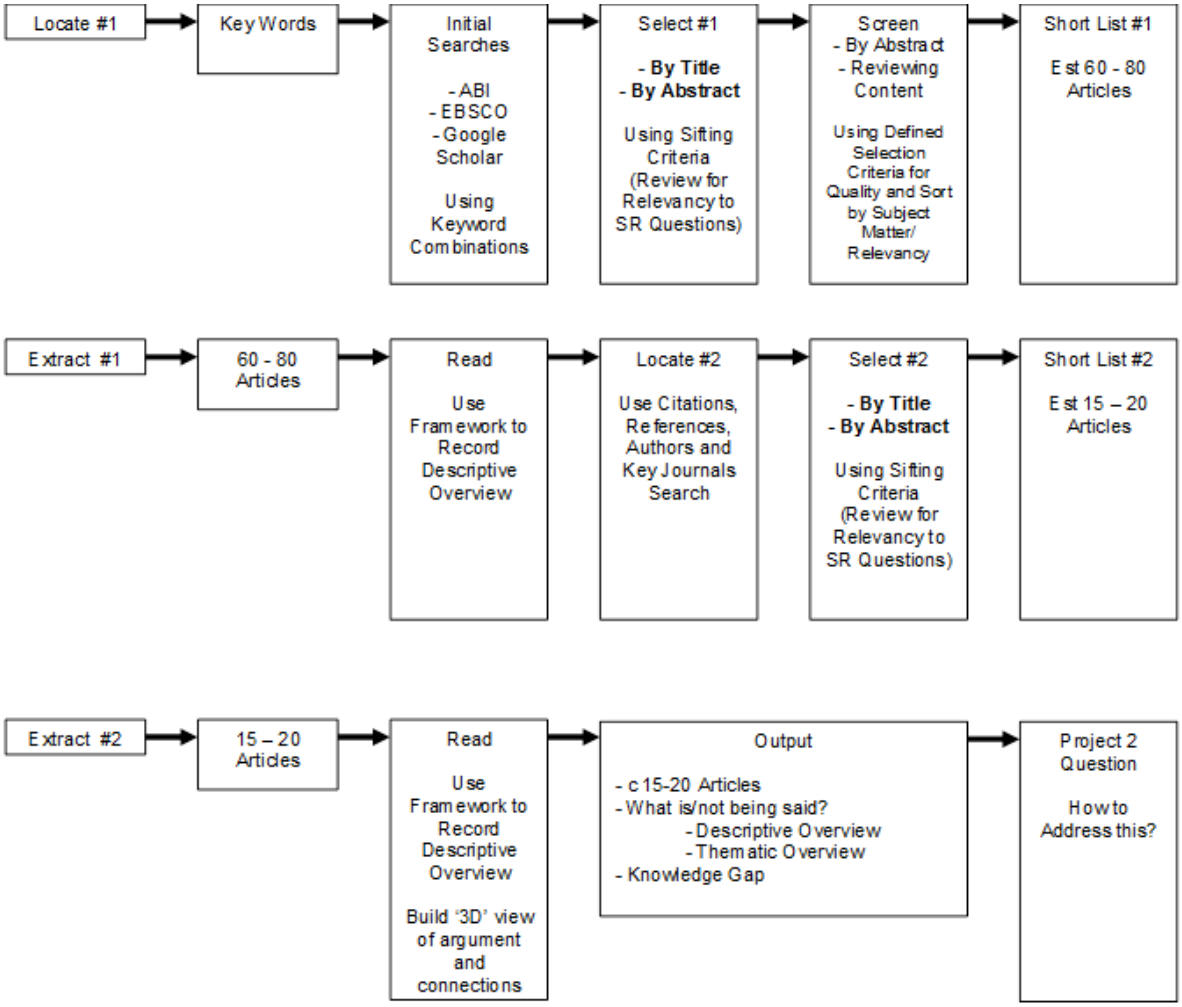
This approach consequently demands a great deal of thought into the rationale behind the criteria, and approach that is then used in taking forward an article into consideration for the Systematic Review or excluding it. The criteria used are set out later in this review.

The review comprised three main steps: Locate, Select and Extract. This is outlined in detail below:

- Creation of a search strategy to ***locate*** relevant literature
- Criteria used ***select*** the correct material based on relevancy and quality
- Data ***extraction***, sense making and synthesis.

The practice steps involved in achieving this are outlined in the Locate/Select/Extract figure located over the page.

As time progressed the Systematic Review literature's relevance was maintained by annual searches run using the search strings outlined below and new articles located, selected (or rejected) and extracted as necessary.



Locate and Extract Conceptual Map (2010)

Databases

The aim of this review was to gather relevant information from the literature on LMs when implementing HRM Practices and how this impacts on organisational performance through FLEs. By following a structured and systematic approach it has ensured that the possibility of omitting literature has been reduced significantly. Electronic databases provided the main source of information. Following comparison between EBSCO and ABI/Inform, it was decided that because of the volume of searches that would be undertaken, ABI/Inform would be selected as the main database for use. This was because:

- It allowed access to all journals relevant to the domains being searched

- The search strings used could be long and complex and this was an important consideration, given the high number of terms that needed to be used
- It was stable and so could be used for long periods of time
- It is one of the most comprehensive and widely used databases for academic research in business and management
- Covers over 2,700 publications across different management disciplines
- It would be particularly helpful in exploring the areas of Human Resource Management, Front Line Management and performance depicted previously in the protocol by mapping the field.

Search Strings to Locate Literature

Following input from SR Expert and guidance from the University Library, the revised Systematic Review Questions were used to develop an initial list of Key Words that were used to describe the area of interest for the principal searches. These were selected using the following criteria:

- General Terms from everyday use – such as terms like HR, Management, Performance and Enactment / Implementation etc.
- Specific Terms such as those in models identified in the Scoping Study – such as terms like HRM-P Literature, Models used etc.

These were then collated and tested using the ABI/Inform Topic Guide Function and some test searches. Test searches involved taking terms and using them in ABI/Inform to test the results that were generated for prima facie relevance. Examples of these are below:

Test Searches using Terms

	String used	**Search engine**	**Number of results found**	**Number relevant & right quality (based on title/abstract review)**	**Pass or Fail**
Test Search	(Human Resource Management OR Human Resources OR HR) AND (LM OR manager)	ABI/Inform	72	26	Pass

These terms were then collated into a table and systematically built into search strings which could be worked through in a recorded and structured fashion. These are detailed below:

Search Strings Used #1 for HR

Initial List	**Final List – Post Test Searches**
Human Resources / HR	Human Resource Management; Human Resources; HR
Personnel	Personnel; Personnel Administration; Personnel Management
Talent Management	Talent Management
People Management	Covered by Terms Above
HR Policies	Covered by Terms Above
HR Practices	Covered by Terms Above
Training & Development	Training; OR Development; OR Employee development; OR Professional development; OR Learning
Recruitment & Selection	(Recruitment and Selection entered separately as well as together) Recruitment; OR Retention; OR Hiring; OR Personnel selection; OR Professional recruitment; OR Selection; OR Resourcing
Compensation & Benefits	(Compensation and Benefits entered separately as well as together) Employee benefits; OR Executive compensation; OR Deferred compensation; OR Workers compensation; OR Wages & salaries; OR Compensation; OR Motivation; OR Wage & salary administration; OR Compensation; OR Stock options; OR Employee benefits; OR Pay
Rewards	Rewards; OR Incentives; OR Incentive plans
Work Life Balance	Work life balance; OR Flexible hours; OR Job satisfaction
Performance Appraisal	Performance appraisal; OR Performance evaluation; OR organisation behaviour; OR Appraisals
Performance Management	Performance management; OR Performance evaluation; OR Participatory management

Search Strings Used #2 – for Management

Initial List	**Final List – Post Test Searches**
LM	LMs; OR managers
Manager	Manager; OR managers; OR managerial skills; OR managerial roles
Management	Management
Leadership	Leadership; OR Management styles; OR executives
Supervisor	Supervisors

Search Strings Used #3 – for Performance

Initial List	**Final List – Post Test Searches**
Profitability	Profitability; OR Business conditions; OR Financial performance; OR Performance evaluation; OR Business growth
Results	Results; OR interim results
KPI's	KPI
Balanced scorecard	Balanced Scorecard; OR Performance evaluation; OR Performance management; OR Business metrics
Share Price	Shares; and / OR Share price; OR Stock price
Measures	Performance evaluation
Performance measurement	Quality of service; OR benchmarks; OR performance; OR measurement; OR employee retention
Sales	Sales; OR retail sales
Turnover	Turnover; OR business growth; OR employee turnover
Market share	Market share
Productivity	Productivity; OR productivity measurement
Behaviour	Behaviour; OR organisational behaviour
Engagement	Engagement; OR employee involvement

Once the terms were finalised they were cross tabulated to create three key thematic search areas: HRM and Managers; HRM and Performance; HRM and Enactment. These were understood to be the likely combinations to identify articles relevant to the Systematic Review Questions. In total 107 searches were conducted, of which 74 led to reading through titles and abstracts. Those 33 omitted were those which produced unsearchable numbers, though these were always revisited in order that they produced manageable results by refining and altering the search terms. A result was deemed searchable if it produced 1000 hits or less. This produced search results totalling 17895 articles from 107 searches in total. Relatively swift progress was made through large search results numbers though the maximum number of articles that could be viewed was 30 articles per page at a time (ABI/Inform's maximum). In total this resulted in a

long list of 374 articles from the 17895 articles reviewed (determined by the use of Title primarily, though some were by Abstract as well).

Though a laborious and often tedious process, it is believed to have been the only pragmatic method available to ensure that potentially relevant articles were not missed. It led to a delay in completing the Systematic Review as it took over four months to work through all the possible search string results working at weekends and evenings.

Criteria Used to Select Relevant and Quality Material

Once the 374 articles initially deemed relevant were identified, they were initially reviewed on screen – Title then Abstract – for relevance to the themes of the Systematic Review questions as outlined in the table below:

'Select #1' Criteria

Question Specific Criteria	**Included**	**Not included**
Relevancy – Question 1	Is about mechanisms that explain how HRM leads to performance	Does not discuss how HRM links to performance – only that an association exists
Relevancy – Question – 2	Discusses how non-HR Managers implement HRM or how they have *no* effect	No mention of non-HR Managers' effect on HRM implementation
Relevancy – Question – 3	Discusses influence of managers on employee performance in the context of HRM implementation	Any mention of LMs influence on employee performance is NOT in the context of HRM implementation
Relevancy – Question – 4	Discusses LM influence on employees during HRM implementation	Is not related to HRM implementation

These were understood to be the likely combinations to identify articles relevant to the Systematic Review Questions. This resulted in a shortlist of 175 articles which were then printed for more thorough analysis.

Utilising Findings from the Scoping Study

At this stage the core papers from the Scoping Study were re-examined. Of these, five were felt relevant for inclusion in the Systematic Review. These were all papers relating to the revised Question 1, and related to conceptual mechanisms for the way HRM

relates to organisational performance. By altering the scope of Question 1, these articles did not emerge from the systematic searches but are recognised as relevant.

Quality Appraisal for Full Papers

In terms of process, the 180 articles were examined again based on relevance and also at this stage on quality as well, using the criteria below:

Shortlist Criteria – Title and Abstract

General Criteria	**Include**	**Exclude**
Academic Journal Quality	2* or above	Below 2* (Strong justification needed if to be included – see criteria below)
Relevancy	Has relevance to the revised SR Questions?	Has no relevance to the revised SR questions
Date	Post 1992 (HRM topic only)	Pre 1992 (HRM topic only)
Language	English	Non-English
Conference Paper	Post 2000	Pre 2000
Industry Paper	If paper topic has direct relevance to SR and methodology is robust	If no relevance and/or poor methodology

In addition the following criteria were used for Industry Papers, of which the final review includes five:

Quality Criteria – Industry Papers

Included if they have relevance to one or more of the following subjects: HRM and Performance; LMs and HRM implementation (linked to performance); Employees linked to performance in the context of HRM implementation; HRM Implementation when related to employee discretionary behaviour linked to performance or employee performance; HRM and Performance in the context of implementation of HRM through LMs OR linked to models explaining the HRM performance linkage (the 'Black Box')
Number of citations will be only taken as a guide based on the size of the literature field, i.e. this is expected to be more critical in HRM Systems than in HRM and LMs. Therefore relevancy followed by judgement on methodology will be the principal selection criteria.

As well as academic peer reviewed literature, it was expected that books and industry papers would also need to be considered in the Systematic Review. Through consultation and research, a draft for inclusion/exclusion was created and used to allow the inclusion of three books in the results of the Systematic Review.

Quality Criteria – Books / Reports / Conference Papers

Included if they have robust and high quality (academic standard) research methodology and have been referenced in an academic paper. If this is satisfied they must still have relevance to one or more of the following subjects: HRM; Performance; LMs; Employees; HRM Implementation; HRM and Performance; HRM and Employee Performance
Included if they have been written post 2000
Included if they have been cited in a Full Text Academic Paper selected as part of the Systematic Review
Included if they have been written by an author whose academic articles are included in the Systematic Review final listing
EXCLUDE chapters that are not relevant within criteria outlined above

Quality Criteria for Journals Unrated or Below 2 Stars

It was recognised that some material from this new area of research may be found in less well regarded, but still peer reviewed, academic journals. This was hypothesised because the nature of the research that would be used to understand what LMs were doing would probably include some smaller case studies. In isolation these are not generalisable but would be useful in a Systematic Review. Therefore, so they could credibly be included, quality criteria were created using previous, successful Systematic Reviews as a guide to allow inclusion or exclusion.

Quality Criteria – Conceptual Papers or Meta Reviews

- Clear indication of the area or areas of literature or the disciplines supporting the discussion.
- Explicit identification of the theories/models used and their positioning in their area of literature.
- Comprehensive literature review – identification of key theories, authors, and discussion of the links between their arguments or models.
- If a new model/theory is developed:
- Clear assumptions of new model.
- Indication about how the new model/theory incorporates existing knowledge.
- Indication about how the new model/theory contributes to the existing literature.
- Discussion about limitations and opportunities for further research.

Quality Criteria – Empirical Papers

- Clear indication of the theoretical perspective adopted.
- Pertinent literature review – identification of key theories, authors, and discussion of the links between their arguments or models, as well as strengths and limitations of each perspective.
- A valid methodology – appropriate research design to address the research question, adequate sample size.
- Details about the data collection technique.
- Conclusions supported by the results and the sample.
- Overall consistency between the aims, method, results and conclusion of the research.
- Rigorous reporting and clear presentation of the results – tables, diagrams, etc.
- Discussion about the limitations of the study and the implications of the results.

Using the Quality Criteria

This was turned into a short summary list of criteria, which was used and referred to throughout the searches. While not using a formal scoring system (the volume of studies meant this was not seen as a viable option), it was used as a reference guide while filtering through material that was collected.

Final Shortlist for Inclusion in Systematic Review

Progressing through the searches is now complete and has been onerous and time-consuming. Narrowing the terms was not seen as an option though it is acknowledged that the value in a Systematic Review will come from the sense that is made of the articles identified and not of the mechanics of the searches. However, it is argued that for these Systematic Review Questions to be credibly addressed required a certain quantity of work at the outset in order that the meaning from hard to find articles can be achieved.

The 175 articles plus the five from the Scoping Study were printed off and a paper based review was then begun. This focused on the relevancy as outlined, as well as quality appraisal, as outlined above. The final results of this have been 60 articles (56 peer reviewed academic papers / four industry reports) and three books identified for inclusion in the Systematic Review.

As time passed, articles were added as the searches above were re-run to capture emerging findings. The new articles added by year are:

2011 – 1 x Article

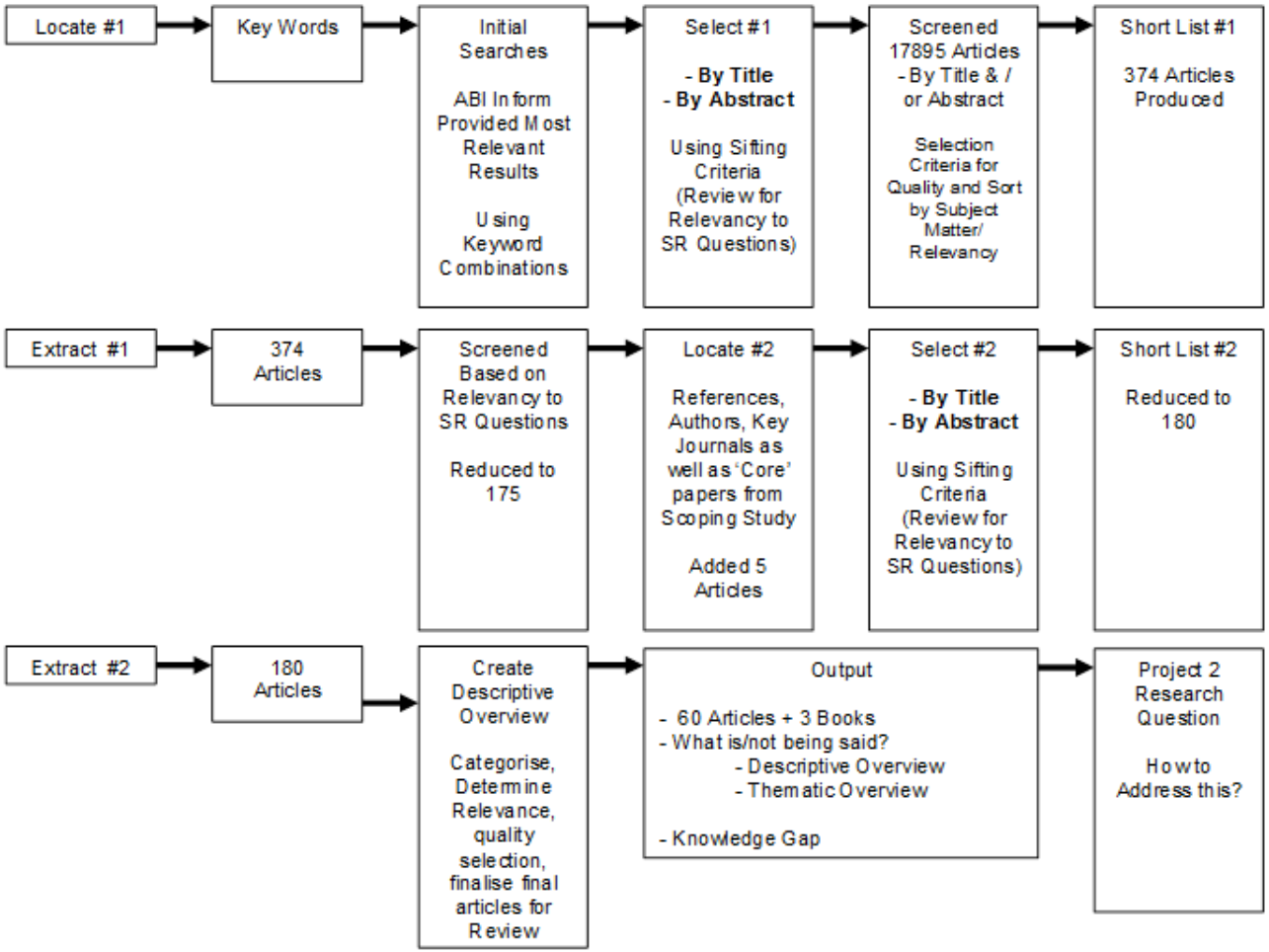
2012 – 1 x Article

2013 – 2 x Articles

2014 – 10 x Articles

2015 – 1 x book

2016 – 4 x Articles



Final Overview of Searches

Data Extraction

The shortlist of 87 (69 original plus 18 since 2010) papers and four (three original plus one since 2010) books underwent the data extraction phase of the review. This involved processing the articles individually to appraise their merit and contribution to the Systematic Review questions.

To ensure consistency, two Data Extraction Tools have been developed. This ensures that the key debates, themes and meanings are extracted so that wider conceptual linkages can be developed.

The first tool helps categorise the articles by the Systematic Review question they are most closely associated with. This involves the following headings:

- Author(s)
- Title
- Year
- Journal (Cranfield Rating)
- Country of Origin
- SR 1 SR 2 SR 3 SR 4

This helped order the research material and also which part of the Systematic Review it relates to. A more detailed tool has been developed to break down the contents of each article. This includes the following headings:

- Author(s)
- Title / Year
- Journal (Cranfield Rating)
- Country of Origin
- Debate, Context & Focus
- Theoretical Foundation
- Methodology
- Summary

List of Key Conversants

Who	What are they addressing	Which Theories	Methods Used
Appelbaum	HRM Systems and how they provide changes to employee behaviours.	Ability, Motivation and Opportunity (AMO)	Case study and questionnaire (Quants)
Arthur	Evidence that HRM Systems are linked to organisational performance	HRM Systems	Questionnaires (Quants)
Becker	HRM Systems and Performance / Discretion and Value Adding Positions	HRM Systems	Questionnaires (Quants) / Case Studies
Bond	Devolution to the line debate	HRM Systems / OCB	Case study (Qual)
Boselie	The nature of the research to date – and what comes next / How HRM impacts performance	HRM Systems	Meta Review, Quants.
Bos-Nehles (previously Nehles)	Understanding the effects of LMs on employees within the intended and enacted framework	HRM Systems/ Ability, Motivation and Opportunity (AMO)	Questionnaires (Quants)
Boxall	How HRM impacts performance / LMs' impact on the implementation of HR Practices and the effects this has on performance	HRM Systems/ Ability, Motivation and Opportunity (AMO)	Case study (Qual) and questionnaire (Quants)
Caldwell	Changing roles in HR	HRM Systems	Case study (Qual) and questionnaire (Quants)
Cunningham	Devolution of HR to the line	HRM Systems	Case study (Qual)
Goodhew	How LMs manage HRM implementation	HRM Systems / Ability, Motivation and Opportunity (AMO)	Case study (Qual)
Guest	The nature of the research to date – and what comes next	HRM Systems	Meta Review, Quants,
Hales	The actual extent to which Front LMs' responsibilities and roles have changed and what tasks and responsibilities make up their roles	Role Theory	Stratified surveys and quantitative analysis
Hope-Hailey	How HRM impacts performance	HRM Systems	Case study (Qual) and questionnaire

			(Quants)
Huselid	HRM Systems and Performance / Discretion and Value Adding Positions	HRM Systems	Questionnaires (Quants) / Case Studies
Hutchinson	How HRM impacts performance / LMs impact on the implementation of HR Practices and the effects this has on performance	HRM Systems/ Ability, Motivation and Opportunity (AMO)	Case study (Qual) and questionnaire (Quants)
Maxwell	Devolution of HR to the line	HRM Systems/ Ability, Motivation and Opportunity (AMO)	Case study (Qual) and questionnaire (Quants)
McGovern	The nature of the research to date – and what comes next/ How HRM impacts performance	HRM Systems / Ability, Motivation and Opportunity (AMO)	Meta Review, Quants.
Paauwe	The nature of the research to date – and what comes next/ How HRM impacts performance	HRM Systems /	Meta Review, Quants.
Purcell	How HRM impacts performance / LMs impact on the implementation of HR Practices and the effects this has on performance	HRM Systems/ Ability, Motivation and Opportunity (AMO)	Case study (Qual) and questionnaire (Quants)
Renwick	How LMs implement HRM Practices / Devolution of HRM to the line	HRM Systems	Case study (Qual)
Truss	How HRM impacts performance	HRM Systems	Case study (Qual) and questionnaire (Quants)
Watson	Devolution of HR to the line	HRM Systems/ Ability, Motivation and Opportunity (AMO)	Case study (Qual) and questionnaire (Quants)
Whittaker	Devolution of HR to the line	HRM Systems/ Ability, Motivation and Opportunity (AMO)	Case study (Qual) and questionnaire (Quants)
Wright	The nature of the research to date – and what comes next/ How HRM impacts performance	HRM Systems	Meta Review, Quants.

Books and Non Academic Research Papers Included

Outlined below are the books and papers that are being included in the Systematic Review.

Books Included in the Review

Book Title	Author	Year
Manufacturing advantage: why high-performance work systems pay off	Appelbaum, E.	2000
HRM and Performance: Unique Approaches for Achieving Long Term Viability	Paauwe, J. Contributor and Editor	2005
Strategic Human Resource Management	Boxall, P. and Purcell, J.	2008
The Differentiated Workforce	Becker and Huselid	
HRM and Performance: Achievements and Chalenges	Paauwe, J Contributor and Editor	2013

The Non Academic papers below have been appraised for quality as well as relevance

Table Non Academic Papers Included

Paper Title / Commissioning Body	Author	Year
Understanding the people and performance link: unlocking the black box (CiPD)	Purcell, J.	2003
Employee attributions of the 'why' of HR Practices: their effect on employee attitudes and behaviors, and customer satisfaction (Cornell University ILR School)	Nishii, L.	2007
Learning and the line: the role of LMs in training, learning and development (CiPD)	Hutchinson, S.	2007
LMs in reward, learning and development (CiPD)	Hutchinson, S.	2007

Summary of Literature							
Author(s)	Title	Year	Journal (Cranfield Rating)	Country of Origin	Contribution	Methods	Include LM & Employee dyad and actual performance
Alan Webb, R.	Managers commitment to the goals contained in the strategic performance measurement systems	2004	Contemporary Accounting Research (3)	US	Tests relationship between performance management measures (goals) and LMs with performance.	Experiment	No
Alfes, K., Truss, C., Soane, E., Rees, C. & Gatenby, M.	The Relationship between LMs behaviour, perceived HRM practices and individual performance: examining the mediating role of engagement	2013	Human Resource Management (4)	UK	Examines the role played by LMs in the link between HRM practices and individual performance outcomes. LMs play an important role in creating and maintaining a positive environment in which employees are willing to engage and perform.	Quants	No – employees only
Alfes, K., Hantz, A., Truss, C. & Soane, E.C.	The link between perceived human resource management practices, engagement and employee behaviour: a moderated mediation model	2013	International Journal of Human Resource Management	Netherlands / UK / US	Suggests that the enactment of positive behavioural outcomes, as a consequence of engagement, largely depends on the wider organisational environment and employees' relationship with their LM.	Quants	No – employees only
Arthur, J. B.	Effects of Human Resource Systems on Manufacturing Performance and Turnover	1994	Academy of Management Journal (4)	US	Seminal work identifying relationship between HRM systems (control and commitment) with performance and turnover rates in steel mills. Questionnaire and quants.	Quants	No
Axelrod, B., Handfield-Jones, H. & Michaels, E.	A new game plan for C players	2002	Harvard Business Review (4)	US	Focusing solely on 'top talent' a false economy.	Quants and selected cases.	No
Bartel, Ann	Human Resource Management and Organizational Performance: Evidence from Retail Banking	2004	Industrial and Labor Relations Review (2)	US	Tested relationship with HRM systems and performance measures. LMs associated with variations of outcome. LMs variations modelled out of the study.	Quants	No
Batt, R.	Who Benefits from Teams? Comparing Workers, Supervisors, and Managers	2004	Industrial Relations (2)	US	Examines discretion and finds varied levels throughout the organisation and self-managed teams were associated with significantly positive outcomes for workers, negative outcomes for supervisors, and	Quants	No

					modestly positive outcomes for managers.		
Becker, T, Billings, R., Eveleth, D & Gilbert, N.	Foci and bases of employee commitment: implications for job performance	1996	Academy of Management Journal (4)	US	Commitment to supervisor related to performance.	Quants	No.
Becker, B., Huselid, M., Pickus, P. & Spratt, M.	HR as a source of shareholder value; research and recommendations	1997	Human Resource Management (4)	US	Meta Review.	N/A	N/A
Becker, Brian & Huselid, Mark	Strategic Human Resources Management: Where do we go from here?	2006	Journal of Management (4)	US	Review of the literature to date. Question associative nature, lack of theory and need for more understanding of black box.	N/A	N/A
Bond, Sue & McCracken, Martin	The importance of training in operationalising HR policy	2005	Journal of European Industrial Training (N/A)	UK	Establishes importance of organisational policies, extent of devolution of authority and responsibility, operational constraints and part played by HR training in effective devolution of HRM to LMs, LM 'common sense' and experience highlighted as important.	Mixed – case study with semi-structured / structured questionnaire	No – mixed respondents using quals but no performance and at department level only
Bos-Nehles, A.	The line makes the difference: LMs as effective HRM partners	2010	University of Twente	Netherlands	PhD Thesis where importance of LMs is explained in the linkage from intended to implemented. Includes five factors of impediments and connection of this to AMO theory.	Mixed	No (self-reports on performance)
Bos-Nehles, A., van Riemsdijk, M. and Looise, J. K.	Employee perceptions of line management performance: applying the AMO theory to explain the effectiveness of LM's HRM implementation	2013	Human Resource Management (4)	Netherlands	Examine LMs and their direct subordinates and examines LMs against an AMO framework, and finds only ability had a positive significant effect on performance self report. Ability in line management skills results in higher HRM performance, and an adequate opportunity enhances the	Quants	No (self-reports on performance)

					performance of competent LMs.		
Boselie, Paul, Dietz, Graeme & Boon, Corine	Commonalities and contradictions in HRM and performance research	2005	Human Resource Management Journal (3)	Netherlands	Meta review of extant literature and approaches taken in the HTM-P debates.	N/A	N/A
Bowen, David & Ostroff, Cheri	Understanding HRM-Firm Performance Linkages: The Role of the 'Strength' of the HRM System	2004	Academy of Management Review (4)	US	Contribution to theory by suggesting systemic perspective to be taken in HRM-P debate.	N/A	N/A
Boxall, P., Guthrie, J. & Paauwe, J.	Editorial introduction: progressing our understanding of the mediating variables linking HRM, employee well-being and organisational performance	2016	Human Resource Management Journal (3)	NZ / US / Netherlands	Critical review of the field and call for change in many of the approaches, views and methodologies being used.	N/A	N/A
Brewster, C, Gollan, P. & Wright, P.	Guest Editors' Note: Human Resource Management and the line	2013	Human Resource Management (4)	UK / US	Overview of the state of the literature.	N/A	N/A
Brewster, C., Brookes, M. & Gollan, P.	The Institutional Antecedents of the Assignation of HRM Responsibilities to LMs	2015	Human Resource Management (4)	UK	This suggests that the relationship between the HRM department and LMs is considerably more nuanced, smaller more likely to devolve than larger though also nuanced / Nordics likewise.	Quants	No
Brandl, Julia, Toft Madsen, Mona & Madsen, Henning	The perceived importance of HR duties to Danish LMs	2009	Human Resource Management Journal (3)	Austria/ Netherlands	'Motivating others' is considered the most important HR duty whereas 'team building', 'handling conflicts' and 'coaching' are considered the least important HR duties.	Quants	No
Bredin, Karin & Söderlund, Jonas	Reconceptualising line management in project-based organisations: The case of competence coaches at Tetra Pak	2007	Personnel Review (2)	Sweden	Identifies literature challenges, case study findings advocating the new management role – the so-called "competence coach" – developing the concept of an HR-oriented management role that is a legitimate player in the HR organisation of a firm.	Qual (Case Study)	No
Church, Allan & Waclawski, Janine	Hold the Line: An Examination of Line vs. Staff Differences	2001	Human Resource	US	Examines differences between supervisors and employees in attitudes.	Quants	No

			Management (4)				
Cunningham, Ian, James, Philip & Dibben, Pauline	Bridging the gap between rhetoric and reality: LMs and the protection of job security for ill workers in the modern workplace	2004	British Journal of Management (3)	UK	Examining return to work procedures and how LMs carried this out.	Quals	No – employee perception only
Currie, Graeme & Procter, Stephen	Exploring the relationship between HR and the middle managers	2001	Human Resource Management Journal (3)	UK	Examines middle managers part in the devolution of HRM responsibilities and finds they have more involvement than LMs.	Quants	No
Den Hartog, Deanne & Verburg, Robert	High performance work systems, organisational culture and firm effectiveness	2004	Human Resource Management Journal (3)	Netherlands	Systemic connection of HRM system to various organisational outcomes.	Quants	No
Dany, Francoise, Guedri, Zied & Hatt, Florian	New insights into the link between HRM integration and organizational performance: the moderating role of influence distribution between HRM specialists and LMs	2008	The International Journal of Human Resource Management (3)	France	Examines the HRM LM link and calls for less what and more how.	Quant	No
De Waal, Andre & Coevert, Vincent	The effect of performance management on the organizational results of a bank	2007	International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management (N/A)	Netherlands	Discretion in LM use of HRM system connected with better performance.	Case study	No
Dorenbosch, Luc, de Reuver, Renee & Sanders, Karin	Getting the HR Message Across: The Linkage between Line-HR Consensus and 'Commitment Strength' among Hospital Employees	2006	Management Revue (1)	Netherlands	LM instrumental in connecting HRM system to employees.	Quants	No
Farndale, E &	Implementing performance	2013	Human	US / UK	Multi-level analysis of the employee	Quants	No

Kelliher, C.	appraisal: exploring the employee experience		Resource Management (4)		perception of the appraisal experience provides initial evidence that the impact of LM actions is important for employee-level outcomes but is also constrained by the organisational environment.		
Fleetwood, Steve & Hesketh, Anthony	Theorising under-theorisation in research on the HRM-Performance Link	2008	Personnel Review (2)	UK	Argument for a methodological shift in the HRM-P debate.	N/A	N/A
Francis, Helen & Keegan, Anne	The changing face of HRM: in search of balance	2006	Human Resource Management Journal (3)	UK/Netherlands	Model for LMs dealing with change in HRM system.	Qual – case study	No
Gelade, Garry & Ivery, Mark	The Impact of Human Resource Management and Work Environment on Organizational Performance	2003	Personnel Psychology (4)	UK	Extends previous research on group level understanding of HRM-P relationships.	Quant	No
Gibb, Stephen	LM involvement in learning and development: small beer or big deal?	2003	Employee Relations (2)	UK	Review of trends and status of the literature on LM involvement in HRM.	N/A	N/A
Goodhew, Geoffrey, Cammock, Peter & Hamilton, Robert	The management of poor performance by front-LMs	2008	Journal of Management Development (1)	New Zealand	How LMs manage poor employee performance.	Qual – case study	No – LMs only
Guest, D	Human resource management and performance: a review and research agenda	1997	The International Journal of Human Resource Management (3)	UK	Meta review of literature and presentation of a model for theory building.	N/A	N/A
Guest, D.	Human resource management and performance: still searching	2011	Human Resource	UK	Critically reviews progress by identifying a series of phases in the development of	N/A	N/A

	for some answers		Management Journal (3)		relevant theory and research then sets out a number of challenges for the future on issues of theory, management processes and research methodology. After two decades of extensive research, we are still unable to answer core questions about the relationship between human resource management and performance. Ignoring LMs and employees as well as method seen as a part of this.		
Hales, Colin	'Bureaucracy-lite' and Continuities in Managerial Work	2002	British Journal of Management (3)	UK	Examines LMs in UK – finds growing bureaucracy of LM role.	Quant	No.
Hales, Colin	Rooted in Supervision, Branching into Management: Continuity and Change in the Role of First-LM	2005	Journal of Management Studies (4)	UK	Examines LMs in UK and finds increase in responsibilities and other significant changes in first LM area.	Quant	No.
Harley, B.	Provocation series paper - The one best way? 'Scientific' research on HRM and the threat to critical scholarship	2015	Human Resource Management Journal (3)	Australia	Critique of the approaches taken and a need for more methodological pluralism.	N/A	N/A
Harney, Brian & Jordan, Claire	Unlocking the black box: LMs and HRM-Performance in a call centre context	2008	International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management (N/A)	UK	Uses Purcell's "People-Performance Model" as a sensitising framework to inform an in-depth case study of a call centre. This provides a mechanism to unlock the HRM-Performance black box by focusing on the ability, motivation and opportunities for LMs to perform and any subsequent impact on employee outcomes. One large client exerted significant control over the HRM policies developed within the call centre. Evidence suggests, however, that LMs' interventions ameliorated some of the negative aspects of work tasks and the HRM imposed by this dependency relationship.	Qual / quants - case study	No – multiple level but not individual LM and direct report employee or performance data used.

Hope-Hailey, Veronica, Gratton, Lynda, McGovern, Patrick, Stiles, Philip & Truss, Catherine	A chameleon function? HRM in the '90's	1997	Human Resource Management Journal (3)	UK	Presents model of the strategic part played by HRM function.	Qual - case study	No
Hope-Hailey, Veronica, Farndale, Elaine & Truss, Catherine	The HR department's role in organisational performance	2005	Human Resource Management Journal (3)	UK	Tensions between the rhetoric of HRM strategy, the grim reality of the employee experience and a lack of focus on human capital meant the outstanding financial performance was not sustainable in the longer term.	Qual – case study	No
Jones, Derek, Kalmi, Panu & Kauhanen, Antti	How does employee involvement stack up? The effects of human resource management policies in a retail firm	2010	Industrial Relations (2)	US	Case study on impact of HRM practice on employees.	Quants	No
Kinnie, N., Hutchinson, S., Purcell, J., Rayton, B. & Swart, J.	Satisfaction with HR practices and commitment to the organisation: why one size does not fit all	2005	Human Resource Management Journal (3)	UK	Examines employees satisfaction with HR practices and commitment to organisation – presents revised people and performance model for first time / commitment factors varied in differing organisations.	Quants	No – but uses multiple levels
Khilji, Shaista & Wang, Xiaoyun	'Intended' and 'implemented' HRM: the missing linchpin in strategic human resource management research	2006	International Journal of Human Resource Management (3)	US	Emphasises importance of implementation.	Quants	No
Larsen, Henrik Holt & Brewster, Chris	Line management responsibility for HRM: what is happening in Europe	2003	Employee Relations (2)	Denmark / UK	Comparison of the devolution of HRM responsibilities across Europe and finds trend is shared across countries.	Quants	No
Mayrhofer, Wolfgang, Muller-Camen, Michael,	Devolving responsibilities for human resources to line management? An empirical	2004	Journal for East European Management	Germany	Comparing the extent of devolution to the line across European countries.	Quants	No

Ledolter, Johannes, Strunk, Guido & Erten, Christiane	study about convergence in Europe		Studies (N/A)				
Maxwell, G. & Watson, S.	Perspectives on LMs in human resource management: Hilton International's UK Hotels	2006	International Journal of Human Resource Management (3)	UK	HRM system positively viewed by senior managers when linked to organisational performance.	Qual - interviews	No
McConville, Teri	Devolved HRM responsibilities, middle managers and role dissonance	2002	Personnel Review (2)	UK	Examines middle managers' part in devolution of HRM system – shows they have an interactive and involved part.	Qual – semi-structured	No
MacDermott, A., Conway, E., Rousseau, D. & Flood, P.	Promoting effective psychological contracts through leadership: the missing link between HR strategy and performance	2013	Human Resource Management (4)	UK / Eire / US	Framework for examining the psychological contracts with employees.	N/A	N/A
MacNeil, Christina	LMs: facilitators of knowledge sharing in teams	2003	Employee Relations (2)	UK	Call for more research on how LMs influence knowledge sharing in their teams.	N/A	N/A
McGovern, Patrick, Gratton, Lynda, Hope-Hailey, Veronica, Stiles, Philip & Truss, Catherine	Human resource management on the line	1997	Human Resource Management Journal (3)	UK	Highlights variability of competence and standards of LM responsibility for HRM practices. Identifies institutional factors, short termism by managers and restructuring as influences.	Mixed – case studies	No
Murphy, Glen & Southey, Greg	High performance work practices: Perceived determinants of adoption and the role of the HR practitioner	2003	Personnel Review (2)	Australia	Meta review of the level of innovativeness in the HRMBP in devolved HRM systems – four dimensional model developed.	N/A	N/A
Nehles, Anna, van Riemsdijk, Maarten, Kok,	Implementing Human Resoure Management Successfully: A First Line Management	2006	Management Revue (1)	Netherlands	Focuses on LMs (first) – introduces five factors of LM reluctance to engage with HRM responsibilities from literature and	Qual – case study and semi-	No

Irene & Looise, Jan Kees	Challenge				compares it to what they say – desire not perceived as a problem by LMs but the rest are perceived as hindrances	structured	
Nishii, L., Lepak D. & Schneider, B	Employee attributions of the 'why' of HR practices: their effects on employee attitudes and behaviours, and customer satisfaction	2008	Personnel Psychology (4)	US	Demonstrates variability of employee attribution and connects this to employee behaviours – evidence for the variability of LM implementation.	Quants	No
Nijman, Derk-Jan, Nijhof, Wim, Wognum, Ida & Veldkamp, Bernard	Exploring the differential effects of supervisor support on the transfer of training	2006	Journal of European Industrial Training (N/A)	Netherlands	Variations on supervisor training outcomes.	Quants	No
Nowicki, Margaret & Rosse, Joseph	Managers' views on how to hire: building bridges between science and practice	2002	Journal of Business and Psychology (2)	US	Examined LMs' views of usefulness and value of recruitment processes – highlights lack of awareness rather than a lack of interest.	Quants	No
Paauwe, Jaap & Boselie, Paul	'Best practices…in spite of performance': just a matter of imitation?	2005	International Journal of Human Resource Management (3)	Netherlands	Offers framework to test Best practice approach to HRM system design using an RBV approach.	N/A	N/A
Paauwe, Jaap & Boselie, Paul	HRM and performance: what next?	2005	Human Resource Management Journal (3)	Netherlands	Meta review of literature to date – outlining conceptual and methodological challenges - calls for multi-dimensional research designs to include employee perceptions of performance.	N/A	N/A
Papalexandris, Nancy & Panayotopoulou, Leda	Exploring the partnership between LMs and HRM in Greece	2005	Journal of European Industrial Training (N/A)	Greece	Explores interaction between LMs and HRMBPs. Shows greater collaboration but obstacles remain – mainly based on the additive effect of HR practices to existing responsibilities.	Quants	No
Parkes, C., Scully, J., West, M. &	"High commitment" strategies It ain't what you do; it's the way	2007	Employee Relations (2)	UK	Employee involvement is used successfully by LMs to enable frontline staff to contribute	Case studies (4)	

Dawson, J.	that you do it				their knowledge to their work.		
Peach Martins, Lola	A holistic framework for the management of first tier managers	2007	Management Decision (1)	UK	Examines influences on the ways LMs incorporate their HR practices – Role definition. Perception and Attitudes / training / organisational support.	Qual – case study	No
Perry, Elissa & Kulik, Carol	The devolution of HR to the line: Implications for the perceptions of people management effectiveness	2008	International Journal of Human Resource Management (3)	Australia / US	Survey of HR view of people management effectiveness and showed perceived positive view of effect of devolving to LMs but LM training not as important as expected.	Quants	No
Purcell, John, Kinnie, Nick, Hutchinson, Sue	Understanding the People and Performance Link: Unlocking the black box	2003	CiPD Research Report (Work and Employment Research Centre) & School of Management, University of Bath (N/A)	UK	Detailed study of 12 organisations over two years from which the people and performance model and a theory linking AMO, HR practices and LMs to employee performance was developed.	Mixed	No – did not include individual employee or LM and specific employee perspectives and department level performance only
Purcell, John & Hutchinson, Sue	Front-LMs as agents in the HRM-performance causal chain: theory, analysis and evidence	2007	Human Resource Management Journal (3)	UK	Selfridges case study from people and performance research presented showing impact on employee performance from making changes that improved how LMs carried out people management responsibilities.	Mixed	No – did not include individual employee or LM and specific employee perspectives and department level performance only
Renwick, Douglas	HR-line work relations: a review, pilot case and research agenda	2000	Employee Relations (2)	UK	Shows conflict and tensions between HR and LMs.	Qual – pilot case study	No
Renwick, Douglas & MacNeil, Christina	Line manager involvement in Careers	2002	Career Development International	UK	Review of the literature highlighting problems with LM adoption of HR practice responsibilities.	N/A	N/A

			(1)				
Renwick, Douglas	LM involvement in HRM: an inside view	2003	Employee Relations (2)	UK	Reports problematic view of LM involvement in HR practice implementation – LMs did not see these responsibilities as theirs.	Qual – semi-structured interviews	No
Schneier, Craig	Implementing Performance Management and Recognition and Rewards (PMRR) Systems at the Strategic Level: A Line Management Driven Effort	1989	HR Human Resource Planning (N/A)	US	Explores and explains a single case study of HR practice and highlights importance of LM in making it achieve the aims set out.	Qual – case study	No
Truss, Catherine	Complexities and Controversies in Linking HRM with Organizational Outcomes	2001	Journal of Management Studies (4)	UK	Instead of devising a list of 'best practice' HRM from the literature and testing its impact on performance, instead invert the question and take a firm that is financially successful and ask what HR policies and practices it uses then also examine the way in which these policies are enacted. Found that even successful organisations do not always implement 'best practice' HRM, and that there is frequently a discrepancy between intention and practice. Highlights the complexity and informal processes involved in enactment.	Mixed and range of informants	No – used an exploratory approach and multi-level but self-report on employee outcomes
Truss, Catherine, Gratton, Lynda, Hope-Hailey, Veronica, Stiles, Philip & Zaleska Joanna	Paying the piper: choice and constraint in changing HR functional roles	2002	Human Resource Management Journal (3)	UK	Highlights the complex environment in which the HR changing HRMBP role operates and which makes the demands of devolution to the line harder to meet.	Quants	No
Watson, Sandra, Maxwell, Gillian & Farquharson, Lois	LMs' views on adopting human resource roles: the case of Hilton (UK) hotels	2007	Employee Relations (2)	UK	Explores differing perspectives between LMs on HR responsibilities revealing multiple divergences of opinion.	Qual – case study	No
Whittaker, Susan & Marchington,	Devolving HR Responsibility to the line	2003	Employee Relations (2)	UK	Examination of LM perception of involvement in HR activities. LMs more	Quant in depth study	No

Mick					motivated for involvement that was expected with lack of support from HR main concern. Used by Nehles et al., 2006.	/ case study	
Wright, Patrick, McMahan, Gary, Snell, Scott & Gerhart, Barry	Comparing Line and HR Executives Perceptions of HR Effectiveness: Service, Roles and Contributions	2001	Human Resource Management (4)	US	Compared LM perceptions with HRMBPs showing discrepancies in how each views the other's effectiveness with greatest differences in most important areas for strategic HR.	Quant	No
Wright, P. Gardner, T. Moynihan, L. & Park, H.	Measurement error in research on human resources and firm performance: Additional data and suggestions for future research	2001	Personnel Psychology (4)	US	Challenges use of single respondent surveys for the measurement error they contain.	Quants	No
Wright, Patrick, Gardner, Timothy & Moynihan, Lisa	The impact of HR practices on the performance of business units	2003	Human Resource Management Journal (3)	US/UK	Examines relationship between perceptions of HR with performance outcomes and finds HRM practices predict better operational outcomes.	Quants	No
Wright, Patrick & Haggerty, John	Missing Variables in Theories of Strategic Human Resource Management: Time, Cause and Individuals	2005	Management Revue (1)	US	Temporal effect of HRM practice and performance highlighted as the system cannot be responsible for the outcome found.	Quants	No
Wright, Patrick & Nishii, Lisa	Variability Within Organizations: Implications for Strategic Human Resource Management	2007	Center for Advanced Human Resource Studies (CAHRS) Working Paper	US	Highlights the difference between intended and enacted. Also introduces the notion of variability as problematic.	N/A	N/A

Articles Selected for Review with Summary Extraction Framework

Author(s)	Title	Debate, Context & Focus	Theoretical Foundation	Methodology
Arthur, J. B.	Effects of Human Resource Systems on Manufacturing Performance and Turnover	Looks at statistical importance of HRM Systems to organisational performance. Compared the presence of sophisticated HRM systems designed to drive commitment ahead of control with performance figures across different production facilities.	The importance of HRM as a system as opposed to a bundle of practices.	Studied steel producing mini mills in the US. Compared the presence of HRM systems with performance statistics (productivity, wastage, employee turnover)
Bartel, Ann	Human Resource Management and Organizational Performance: Evidence from Retail Banking	Exploring HPWP in a financial organisation to determine the relationship between HRM and performance. Isolates FLM impact as an intermediary variable so that they can be removed from impacting the link between HRM and results.	HRM – Performance / AMO / HPWP.	Single organisation case study. Looks at the business unit level of analysis. Mix of interviews and focus groups before utilising a quantitative analysis approach for the final findings.
Becker, Brian & Huselid, Mark	Strategic Human Resources Management: Where do we go from here?	Evaluation of HRM/Performance debate as at 2006 by two of the most influential authors in the field.	Strategic HRM theory – focused on organisational vs. individual/unit level and system level vs. individual HRM Practice level/leans towards 'Best Fit' view/establishes 'Differentiated Workforce' concept/places value creation throughout the organisation.	Posits direction for future research and an overview of the current debate
Bond, Sue & McCracken, Martin	The importance of training in operationalising HR policy	Illustrates a model of LM decision making in relation to employee requests for time off at short notice.	Part of the devolution to the line debate. Also interested in the WLB debate.	Case study evidence from four financial sector service companies in Scotland.
Boselie, Paul, Dietz, Graeme & Boon, Corine	Commonalities and contradictions in HRM and performance research	Meta review of the HRM – Performance debate as at 2005; aims to cover all empirical research data.	Contribution to theory and future research.	Follows a Systematic Review style of analysis where clear criteria for inclusion / exclusion are

				followed and systematic analysis of the material is undertaken.
Bowen, David & Ostroff, Cheri	Understanding HRM-Firm Performance Linkages: The Role of the 'Strength' of the HRM System	Contribution to theory in the HRM – Performance 'black box' debate. Looks at the literature to determine the important mechanisms between intention and outcome.	Theory building and development of a theoretical framework to explain the mechanisms. Based on assumptions of an HRM system motivating to adopt attitudes and behaviours that lead to organisational performance. Therefore linked conceptually to AMO theory, though not directly referenced. Part of contingent HRM movement.	Literature review based, with the research question driving the study.
Boxall, Peter & Purcell, John	Strategy and Human Resource Management	Book examining the current thinking on Strategic HRM. Looks at the relationship it has from strategy forming through to implementation and the connection with organisational performance. Chapter 8 – 'Linking HR Systems to Organisational Performance' is the chapter of interest. Identifies FLM as part of solving the 'Black Box' problem.	AMO theory / RBV / SHRM / Business Partner / Devolution to the line.	References various research and other authors. Textbook format.
Brandl, Julia, Toft Madsen, Mona & Madsen, Henning	The perceived importance of HR duties to Danish LMs	Problems in implementing HRM in a devolved HRM to the line context. Specific interest is in how LMs rate the importance of HR practices (as from a behavioural perspective); this is seen as important in understanding the mechanism.	Devolution to the line / LMs and performance. Links to Purcell work. LMs and implementation of HR practices.	Survey of 1500 Danish businesses completed by Danish LMs. Used instrument developed from literature to interrogate the data. Some assumptions made on

				level of HRM responsibilities within the data
Bredin, Karin & Söderlund, Jonas	Reconceptualising line management in project-based organisations: The case of competence coaches at Tetra Pak	Analysis of HR devolution to the line: specifically to deal with the lack of redesign in LM roles to support the devolution and the lack of research in this area.	Devolution of HR to the line.	In-depth case study of a business unit within a manufacturing organisation (Tetra Pak). Combines case study findings with existing literature. Set in a project setting so it examines a mix of worker types. Based on seven interviews with key 'actors' in the area of interest.
Caldwell, Raymond	The Changing Roles of Personnel Managers: Old Ambiguities, New Uncertainties	Self perception of HR managers in the changes being faced in the way they are doing their role.	Examining the models of Storey and Ulrich and using Storey's as a tool to direct questioning.	Mix of survey and interviews (98/350 survey + 12/34 interviews) of HR managers and their self perception. Semi-structured interviews and fixed survey.
Church, Allan & Waclawski, Janine	Hold the Line: An Examination of Line vs. Staff Differences	Looking at perceived differences in self perception between LM's and HR Managers.	HR devolution and the line / HR relationships with LMs.	Looks at 360 self ratings on 53 HR and 46 LMs in a single large US retail organisation.
Cunningham, Ian & Hyman, Jeff	Devolving human resource responsibilities to the line Beginning of the end or a new beginning for personnel?	Examining the implementation of HRM practices and the influence of various variables (including LMs).	Devolution to the line.	Case study of four large organisations (mix of public and private) at the SBU level.
Cunningham, Ian, James, Philip & Dibben, Pauline	Bridging the gap between rhetoric and reality: LMs and the protection of job security for ill workers in the modern workplace	Devolution to the line / HR practice intention and actual outcome. Specific interest in the nature and causes of the gap between intention and actual practice – with the variable of LM activity being	Devolution to the line.	UK case study of four organisations (two x public sector, a utility company and a transport operator).

		the area of focus. Employee security used as area of study.		
Currie, Graeme & Procter, Stephen	Exploring the relationship between HR and the middle managers	Explores the relationship between HR and middle level LMs. Single case study into an NHS trust.	Devolution to the line.	Single organisational / two case studies into an NHS trust. Uses framework drawn from strategic management literature to examine the interplay. Semi-structured interviews with ten managers, all interviewed twice. Also three staff members interviewed.
Den Hartog, Deanne & Verburg, Robert	High performance work systems, organisational culture and firm effectiveness	Research specifically into the relationship between HPWP and firm effectiveness.	HRM and Performance – HPWPs.	175 organisations (Danish) asking HR managers and CEO to compete questionnaires with perceptions and empirical evidence.
Dany, Francoise, Guedri, Zied & Hatt, Florian	New insights into the link between HRM integration and organizational performance: the moderating role of influence distribution between HRM specialists and LMs	Seeking clarity on the nature of the different internal organisational relationships between HR at a strategic level and the LM implementation level.	HRMBP Role / Devolution to the line /HRM and performance / RBV.	CRANET Survey data set used. Examine through structural equation the relationship between HRM / strategy linkage with HRM / LM linkage (organisations across Europe with over 200 employees – sample size 3442). Testing the integration of HRM with organisational performance.
De Waal, Andre & Coevert, Vincent	The effect of performance management on the organizational results of a	Specifically interested in the implementation of a performance focused HR practice (performance management	Sits in the PMS (Performance Management Systems) literature – debate. This area	Single business unit longitudinal case study (branch of a bank).

	bank. Explores the impact and working of a new performance management system.	system) in a retail bank and how this impacted on organisational results.	looks at the design and implementation of this one area of HR practice in order to understand how it works. (PMS system in question based on INK, the Dutch version of EFQM).	Performance data captured (before and after research); interviews and observations. Descriptive and analysing.
Dorenbosch, Luc, de Reuver, Renee & Sanders, Karin	Getting the HR Message Across: The Linkage between Line-HR Consensus and 'Commitment Strength' among Hospital Employees	Looks at features of an HRM System that help / constrain the implementation of HR practices. Department level analysis – highlights importance of understanding HR at this level.	Related to Bowen and Ostroff's theoretical work on the HRM System.	Looks at 66 business units (from four hospitals) using a multi level questionnaire (671).
Fleetwood, Steve & Hesketh, Anthony	Theorising under-theorisation in research on the HRM-Performance Link	To add to the understanding of the possible theoretical links between HRM and organisational performance.	HRM and Performance.	Meta review with a contribution to theory based on findings.
Francis, Helen & Keegan, Anne	The changing face of HRM: in search of balance	Inductive research into the impact working in the business partner model is having on perceptions within organisations on the HRM function.	Emergent models of HRM: business partnering; devolution to the line.	Interviewed (84) those with an insight into HRM from a strategic perspective (principally CiPD members). Inductive approach (semi-structured).
Gelade, Garry & Ivery, Mark	The Impact of Human Resource Management and Work Climate on Organizational Performance	Building understanding of HRM and Performance, in particular the importance of environment. Findings at the business unit level highlight importance of LM impact on HRM outcomes (when paper read in context of wider material).	HRM and Performance.	Case study of a single (retail bank) organisation looking at multiple branches in the UK. Mix of questionnaires, interviews and review of organisational material and data. Single time point study.
Gibb, Stephen	LM involvement in learning and development: small beer or big deal?	Focused on the involvement of LMs in L&D and the effect this has on L&D effectiveness.	Part of the HRM – devolution debate, but with specific interest in L&D – debate in	A review of the literature and contribution to theory.

			the L&D about the advantages and disadvantages of LM involvement in L&D.	
Goodhew, Geoffrey, Cammock, Peter & Hamilton, Robert	The management of poor performance by front-LMs	Looks at the consistency of LMs managing poor performance in a single service organisation with formal PM system.	Follows the theme within the literature (cites Purcell et al., 2003) that FLMs do not deal effectively or do not like dealing with poor performance. Also cites Cunningham 2001 on the lack of consistency in this area.	Case study of a single organisation (financial institution). Cognitive scripts used and information on FLMs collected. (Stronger the script = more consistent management) Data collected (32 managers) is based on FLM perceptions all operating at the same level. Looking for evidence of consistency.
Guest, D	Human resource management and performance: a review and research agenda	Looking at the HRM – performance debate.	Contribution to theory and direction of future research.	Review of existing studies.
Hales, Colin	'Bureaucracy–lite' and Continuities in Managerial Work	Questions three frequently asserted claims: centralised bureaucracy is being replaced with empowered decentralised teams; traditional manager role is now more facilitative than command/ control of before; managerial work is changing from administration to leadership and entrepreneurship.	FLM role theory – the evolution on the role of FLMs debate.	Uses a case study approach (hotel and retail sectors in Zimbabwe / textiles in Malaysia plus two UK public sector organisations claiming to be introducing empowerment programmes for their FLMs) to argue that the bureaucratic model still forms the core of the managerial role, and that individual responsibility and vertical accountability still pertain.
Hales, Colin	Rooted in Supervision, Branching into	Examines the change in the roles of LMs in the face of much debate on the nature	Testing notions of the development of FLMs to	Surveys organisations to understand current role and

	Management: Continuity and Change in the Role of First-LM	of the change. Finds that while the role has grown, the core element of a supervisory core has been strengthened. The predictions of leaders of self managing teams aren't found. Additional responsibilities added from former Middle Managers above are not in line with the scope of autonomy or decision making that such responsibility should warrant. 'Apart from a few exceptions, 'performance – oriented supervision' is at the heart of the FLM role' p.495. 'Contrary to the claims of the HRM literature a sharper focus on performance has not brought a shift from control to commitment and the FLM has not become a quasi middle manager exercising detached co-ordination of self managing teams' p.495. 'The piecemeal extension of the FLM role into either financial responsibility for controlling costs or HR responsibility for recruitment, appraisal, training and discipline' p.497. External supervision – challenges AMO theory behind HRM.	Team Leaders and Business Managers.	evidence of what changes there have been. 135 (all with ten or more employees) Informants a mixture of LMs (senior), HR, intermediate FLMs or function heads.
Harney, Brian & Jordan, Claire	Unlocking the black box: LMs and HRM-Performance in a call centre context	Explores part of the linkage within the 'black box' between HRM Practices and Organisational Performance. Area of interest is in the LM as a key variable, specifically the impact their behaviour	Part of the HRM-P debate. Builds on Purcell's work and uses the Bath Model as a sensitising framework. AMO – the concept that	In-depth case study of a single organisation. Using Purcell's 'People – Performance Model' it focuses on AMO by

		while managing has on employees' outcomes in a call centre. While site specific, it supports further research into this area.	discretionary effort is the explanatory mechanism for employees contributing to organisational performance. It is the difference between achieving the most basic organisational goals and going beyond it.	interviews in multiple sites at multiple levels. Survey of employees.
Hope-Hailey, Veronica, Gratton, Lynda, McGovern, Patrick, Stiles, Philip & Truss, Catherine	A chameleon function? HRM in the '90s	Interested in the changes in the HRM function in the 1990s in a number of areas. Researches Leading Edge Foundation member companies as part of a five year longitudinal study.	Devolution of HRM to the line / Strategic HRM / HRM and Performance.	Data gathered from members of the Leading Edge Foundation members (comprising a mix of sectors). Collected over an 18 month period (1993-1995). Self selected sample of large orgs with a mix of consumer, pharmaceutical, finance and public sector. (All private sector in top five for respective sector performance). Single business units selected for study. Mix of interviews (multi-layered, structured and unstructured) and audit of material.
Hope-Hailey, Veronica, Farndale, Elaine & Truss, Catherine	The HR department's role in organisational performance	A longitudinal case study focused on the HRM – performance black box issue and shows a complex picture of improving performance but declining employee commitment and morale. Highlights that focusing on short term financial measures leads to unsustainable longer term performance. The inherent conflict this creates in LM roles (among other areas) is	HRM/Devolution debate. Workers as deliverers of performance in the HRM-P debate. Looks at the HR Business Partner concept – 'a strategic partnering for the HR	Case study of 'Successbank' lasting five years. Involves questionnaires of employees and managers, focus groups and interviews.

		highlighted. Addresses gap in majority of HRM–P literature that has looked at the HRM-P relationship without trying to understand the mechanisms. 'The focus in these studies has been on the policies and strategies rather than role played by individual actors and departments in putting these policies into practice', p.49.	department while devolving responsibility for people management to the line', p.49.	
Jones, Derek, Kalmi, Panu & Kauhanen, Antti	How does employee involvement stack up? The effects of human resource management policies in a retail firm	HRM and performance linkage examined using different business (retail) units of the same organisation.	HRM and performance.	Single organisation case study looking at multiple business units (47). Identify LM impact then isolate it to extract the employee level outcomes.
Khilji, Shaista & Wang, Xiaoyun	'Intended' and 'implemented' HRM: the missing linchpin in strategic human resource management research	Investigating the difference between intended and implemented HRM as this links to performance outcomes (consistency of).	HRM and performance debate / HRM intended vs. implemented. Supports a view that the measure of an HRM Practice should be based on the actual outcome it produces, not existence from a senior level perspective.	Interviews with mix of HR and line (total 195) and a (508 response) questionnaire in the banking industry in Pakistan. Tested the link between employee satisfaction and the closeness between intended and actual implementation with performance.
Larsen, Henrik Holt & Brewster, Chris	Line management responsibility for HRM: what is happening in Europe	Looking at the devolution to the line of HRM in different countries and contexts. Interested in the perceptions of senior HR practitioners.	HRM devolution to the line.	Data from CRANET survey to capture HR perceptions on the devolution to LMs (the extent) and also the variance in locations (from a national perspective).

				Respondents from 22 countries totalling 4,050.
Mayrhofer, Wolfgang, Muller-Camen, Michael, Ledolter, Johannes, Strunk, Guido & Erten, Christiane	Devolving responsibilities for human resources to line management? An empirical study about convergence in Europe	Interested in the way that HRM is being devolved to the line across Europe – shows that while it is happening there is little convergence in how.	HRM devolution to the line / HRMBP.	Evaluation of the CRANET database which is dedicated to analysing developments in HRM in organisations with more than 200 employees across Europe.
Maxwell, G. & Watson, S.	Perspectives on LMs in human resource management: Hilton International's UK Hotels	Devolution to the line debate. Explores LMs' and HR perspectives on people management. Five aspects of difference: 1) understanding and ownership of the company's service and HR strategy; 2) LM involvement in the ranking of HR activities; 3) HR support for LMs; 4) barriers to LM involvement in HR activity; 5) competence of LMs in HR activities. Most divergence in poor performing hotels / greater convergence in high performing hotels.	Looks at HRM and HRD as similar but different areas of research.	Survey of views of LMs and HR Mgrs in Hilton Hotels (UK).
McConville, Teri	Devolved HRM responsibilities, middle managers and role dissonance. Takes into account structural as well as cultural factors impacting the context within which the roles exist.	Report on middle LMs in public services. Seeking greater understanding of the phenomenon 'Role Dissonance', tension in their role. This is distinct from role conflict and role ambiguity. Building on previous research (McConville and Holden, 1999).	Looking at devolved HRM to the line. Testing a conceptual model developed in an earlier paper (McConville and Holden, 1999) used to explore 'Role Dissonance'. Seeking to support or otherwise the earlier study.	Utilises focused qualitative research. Data gathered from the NHS, Armed Forces and Fire Service were used to test and inform an explanatory framework for the phenomenon 'Role Dissonance'. Focus groups, structured questions.
MacNeil, Christina	LMs: facilitators of knowledge sharing in teams	Contribution to theory in the devolution of HRM to the line debate, with a specific	Devolution to the line debate.	Reviewing literature and formulating an argument on

		focus on how LMs influence knowledge sharing in teams.		where theoretical gaps lie.
McGovern, Patrick, Gratton, Lynda, Hope-Hailey Veronica, Stiles, Philip & Truss, Catherine	Human resource management on the line?	Examined the prospects for devolving HR to the line at similar time as Ulrich (1997) was publishing the business partner conceptual model.		Review formulated during research into existing (seven) organisations, all successful in their sector and in a diverse range of sectors. Uses Performance Appraisal as the practice unit of investigation – chosen as it has direct LM involvement; combines the soft and the hard elements of HRM; it feeds into other practices such as reward/ training. Also looks at constraints facing LMs, specifically how it impacts implementation consistency and quality. Data are collected using a mix of interviews, focus groups and surveys.
Murphy, Glen & Southey, Greg	High performance work practices: Perceived determinants of adoption and the role of the HR practitioner	Researching the role of the HR practitioner in implementation of HR practices. Outcome is the production of a new model for the role of the HR practitioner in the implementation of HPWP HR practices. 4 Dimension model	Looks at the relationship between innovation and HPWPs and the HR practitioner's role in this mechanism.	Mix of questionnaires (135 – senior level HR managers) and interviews (18 senior level HR) sourced using Australian HR Institute, chosen as 'elite members'.
Nehles, Anna, van Riemsdijk, Maarten, Kok, Irene & Looise, Jan Kees	Implementing Human Resoure Management Successfully: A First Line Management Challenge	Looking at HRM implementation from the perspective of FLMs. Asking three things – did five factors in the literature reflect what was happening in the field; better understanding of	HRM devolution to the line debate / HRM and performance debate.	Four case studies in four MNC business units (all manufacturing). Interviewed 30 FLMs plus four staff members and four HR managers.

		problems; explore further what FLMs perceive as hindering them in performing their HR roles.		Looks at perceptions.
Nijman, Derk-Jan, Nijhof, Wim, Wognum, Ida & Veldkamp, Bernard	Exploring the differential effects of supervisor support on the transfer of training	Interest in the relationship between supervisor support and the transfer of training (effectiveness of the learning from an employee's perspective) – also interested in the effect of other transfer influencing factors. Set in the context of a wider systemic process (HRM system) so has relevance in SR.	L&D 'Transfer of training' debate. How training can best be delivered in an organisational setting. Some research supports a positive relationship between supervisor support and transfer of training but some conflicts with this.	Systematic study of the transfer process. Testing of a model created from a review of the literature. Forms a questionnaire within three organisations. 179 trainees and 32 supervisors sample size.
Nowicki, Margaret & Rosse, Joseph	Managers' views on how to hire: building bridges between science and practice	Looking at the difference between espoused practice in employee selection and the reality of what is happening.	Industrial / Organisational Psychology debate – how science is used in the workplace.	Interview 166 LMs who had enrolled in an HRM undergrad course. Acted as interviewers in their own orgs.
Paauwe, Jaap & Boselie, Paul	HRM and performance: what next?	Overview of achievements in the last decade in the HRM – Performance debate. Highlights progress, achievements and a summary of theoretical and methodological avenues that need to be explored further.	Part of the HRM – Performance debate.	Reviews literature to date to highlight progress and areas of focus that are still needed.
Papalexandris, Nancy & Panayotopoulou, Leda	Exploring the partnership between LMs and HRM in Greece	- Explore HRM – LM relationship - Large Greek Orgs - Trends in Devolving HR to LMs	None outlined. Contribution is to greater understanding of HRM to Line debate but in a Greek context.	Mix of using RQs to analyse existing survey data of Greek orgs (CRANET Survey) and two multi organisational member composed focus groups.
Peach Martins, Lola	A holistic framework for the management of first tier managers	Looking at the key factors influencing HRM performance of FTM (First Tier Managers aka FLMs) and how this holistic strategic framework is integral to this. Part of HR devolution debate and	Sees FTMs as integral to the HRM/P linkage. Argues (eg along with McGovern 1997) that devolution of HR to line is problematic because of	Single company case study approach in 2003 (aerospace and automotive manufacturing). Data collected by mix of

		also the HRM/P linkage debate. Addresses perceived gap of a lack of a holistic strategy for managing FTMs. Argues for FTMs having a place in any strategic HRM planning.	training/skill issues. Takes a 'historical perspective' to shed light on strategic factors: 1) perception and attitudes of primary stakeholders (including FTMs) of the role; 2) degree the role is adequately defined; 3) training and development; and, 4) broader organisational systems and structures facilitating/ hindering role / performance.	interviews and reviewing company literature. (Four x FTMs and six Senior Mgrs). Interviewed different levels using the factors below as a guide. Examines 1) how the company was seeking to change the role; 2) look at how well the FTMs are performing in the role to devise ability; 3) identify what key factors were acting to shape the way they performed. Does not look at employees. Findings support framework Martins developed but could be argued to be influencing the CSPs. Plus only a single study.
Perry, Elissa & Kulik, Carol	The devolution of HR to the line: Implications for the perceptions of people management effectiveness	HR Devolution – contribution to understanding by looking at how HR managers perceive people management effectiveness / looks to bridge gap in knowledge on devolution and people management effectiveness.	Looks at positive and negative ramifications in the literature and contributes knowledge in this area / addresses gap in literature that has looked at the system and not at what is happening at the individual level within the system.	LMs' skills and abilities a key variable / highlights lack of skills and abilities as important so looks at this specifically/used survey of 174 firms (5% response rate/single response /single level/single time) of HR managers or senior execs/not a representative sample.
Purcell, John, Kinnie, Nick, Hutchinson, Sue.	Understanding the People and Performance Link: Unlocking the black box	Investigating the steps from intended to implemented within the 'Black Box' of the HRM – Performance debate.	AMO / HRM and performance / Develop the 'Bath Model' to explain the operationalising / implementation path of HRM	Longitudinal study using multiple organisations, multiple sectors and multiple levels. Data

		Set out to examine the linkage and found the importance of the FLM as an output of research.	Practices and how they impacted on employee behaviour. Examines discretionary choices of FLMs by drawing on Fox's concept of Task range and discretionary content.	gathered from the operating unit level. Some elements of Action Research (Selfridges) and case study as well. (Mix of focus groups, interviews and questionnaires – some organisations used the first year data and this influenced subsequent findings).
Purcell, John & Hutchinson, Sue	LMs in Reward, Learning and Development	Area of interest is LMs in L& D and Reward. Uses an academic standard approach but conducted as a piece of research for CiPD – the professional body of HR managers. Looking at why LMs so important in these areas; how they can support the tasks they are responsible for; how HR can interact with them/ develop them more effectively. Interested in what contextual factors influence managerial behaviour and roles.	Builds on findings from CiPD research in 2003 that FLMs were a vital part of the mechanism for HRM-P 'Black Box' linkage. Also cites Rewarding Customer Service (2005) which picked out LMs as influential in Reward. CiPD Reward Management Survey (2006) HR respondents did not rate LM capability in this area. The CiPD learning and development survey (2007) identifies growing attention being paid to LM development.	Based on interviews (semi-structured), and focus groups with HR and LMs in six case study organisations in different sectors. Four contextual influences dominated the case studies: 1) ownership; 2) external labour market; 3) types of staff employed; 4) need to differentiate between staff groups. Analysed at the business unit level of analysis.
Purcell, John & Hutchinson, Sue	Front-LMs as agents in the HRM-performance causal chain: theory, analysis and evidence	Sits in both devolution of HR and also the HRM/P debates. Looks at extent to which employee commitment towards their employer and their job are influenced by the quality of leadership behaviour and the satisfaction with HR Practices: both have a strong effect. Looks at perceptions of different players (includes comparison with unit level performance). Examines	Argues critical linkage is how HR Practices influence employee attitudes and improve worker performance in ways that are beneficial to the organisation (AMO view of how HR Practices lead to performance). Places FLMs within this as crucial parts of	Uses data collected between 2000 and 2003 from studies into 12 organisations as part of a research programme into the 'impact of people management practices on organisational performance' – mix of interviews and surveys. Previous theory on

		the extent to which leadership behaviour and the enactment of HR practices can be seen as two separate factors; tests two propositions: 1) Influence of FLM leadership behaviour on organisational commitment/job experiences & 2) influence of HR practices on the same measures independent of FLMs and that when combined positives are greater. FLMs – those in the lower echelons of the management hierarchy with immediate responsibility for their subordinates work and performance. As well as attitudinal improvements, performance of the unit improved (sales vs. payroll costs increased/employee retention grew).	the chain: cite evidence on the gap between espoused and actual practices delivered by FLMs. Link FLM 'leadership behaviours' to this. FLMs responsibility goes beyond giving direction to influencing employee attitudes and behaviours through the way the enact HR Practices (eg, selecting, appraising, developing, communicating, involving etc.). Describes twin aspects of FLMs people management activities as leadership behaviour and application of HR Practices. Broadens HR strategy into how it affects leadership behaviour and environment. Findings challenge the number and sophistication of HR practices are less important to their effectiveness (linking with organisational performance) than the way FLMs implement them.	OCB and POS (perceived organisational support) used to shape study. Compared findings with WERS 98 survey data the orgs were in the upper quartile for number of HR practices. Also use a longitudinal case study (Selfridges in Manchester) using mix of survey and interviews. Research looked at the business unit level. Compares intended HR practices with perceptions / unit performance. Assessed the association between the outcome variables (perceptions of FLM leadership & HR). Associations looked at in statistical analysis which revealed the leadership behaviour significance. Cannot look at trends or causality. Longitudinal Case Study – 40 staff in two business units in Trafford Park (Manchester) (started in 2000). Initial research (survey in 2000) revealed good commitment levels with HR practice

				associations, but not with FLM's, eg gap in the appraisal frequency from espoused with actual. Also lack of recognition and appreciation from FLMs. Store revised FLM role (redefined it), all FLMs reapplied for job and selected on behaviours. Revised practices in other areas. Survey one year later revealed different attitudes and perceptions by employees. Case study, a very small sample size.
Renwick, Douglas	HR-line work relations: a review, pilot case and research agenda	Case study into an NHS trust, exploring HRM / LM work relations.	Examining HRM and the line as part of the devolution of the line debate. Interested in four aspects 1) the powerbase between HR and the line; 2) areas of conflict; 3) partnerships and where they exist; 4) reconfiguration of HR work.	Unstructured exploratory interviews with 19 LMs in a pilot case study of a single NHS trust.
Renwick, Douglas & MacNeil, Christina	LM Involvement in Careers	Overview of the literature from the perspective of how it impacts on career management – of LMs and employees. Highlights areas for future research.	Devolution of the line to HR.	Review of lit and contribution to future theory.
Renwick, Douglas	LM involvement in HRM: an inside view	Involvement of the line in HR work has benefits and costs but the nature of the relationship and how it operates is problematic.	Devolution to the line of HRM.	40 interviews with LMs on their experience of handling HR work that has been devolved to them. Looking

				at three different organisations.
Schneier, Craig	Implementing Performance Management and Recognition and Rewards (PMRR) Systems at the Strategic Level: A Line Management Driven Effort	Examination (case study) of an organisation implementing a new HR practice – Performance Management.	HR implementation / Performance Management.	Case study of a single organisation (Manufacturing / Pratt & Whitney).
Truss, Catherine	Complexities and Controversies in Linking HRM with Organizational Outcomes	Building on quantitative work in the mid/late '90s on HPWP; seeking to add depth to a debate where financial outcomes are the sole measure and most studies relied on single respondents. Also adds how policies are enacted as part of the study.	Considers High Performance Work Practice / AMO / RBV / HRM System / Contingency.	Exploratory study of the HRM-P performance linkage by a single case study of a successful organisation (HP). Instead of devising a model and measuring against it, the study looks at a financially successful firm and analyses the HR Practices used.
Truss, Catherine, Gratton, Lynda, Hope-Hailey, Veronica, Stiles & Zaleska Joanna	Paying the piper: choice and constraint in changing HR functional roles	Investigating the changing role of HR. Examining the changing role of the HR function in two contrasting organisations – the NHS and a bank. Illustrates that HR function sits within a complex and dynamic social setting. Presents a model of that, which maps these interrelationships.	Drawing on role-set theory and concepts of negotiated order.	Twin case studies over seven years. Include surveys and interviews.
Watson, Sandra, Maxwell, Gillian & Farquharson, Lois	LMs' views on adopting human resource roles: the case of Hilton (UK) hotels	Exploration of different level of LMs' perspectives on their HRM/HRD roles.	Part of the HR on the line debate (with particular interest in HRD).	Used a deductive approach in multiple business units within a single company (Hilton Hotels UK) to identify enablers and barriers to devolution of HRM.
Watson, Sandra & Maxwell, Gillian	HRD from a functionalist perspective: The views of	Looks at how LMs act in their 'critical role' implementing HRD.	Understanding LMs' understanding of their HRD	Sample of 328 LMs from the Hilton Group (UK).

	LMs		roles and responsibilities; the key HRD activities they engage in; challenges they face in relation to their role.	
Whittaker, Susan & Marchington, Mick	Devolving HR Responsibility to the line	Investigation to add knowledge in the devolution to the line of HR debate. Looks at a single manufacturing organisation in a case study approach. Looks at senior managers' views and only FLMs through what they say. HR devolved against a background of cost cutting and downsizing. Clear strategy in place to move the HR function towards a more devolved operating style. Business pressures clearly cited as forcing people management practices lower down the list of priorities. 'There was a definite tendency in almost every case for LMs to put the needs of the business before the development of people purely because this was rewarded' p.255. Also HR too remote, within an 'ivory tower', though the LMs bought into the Biz partner concept. HR support seen as 'paramount' to success, but it was not operationalised to be as value adding as was needed.	Uses case study approach to look into the conflicting views in the literature – LMs being the right people to have HR devolved to them or not. Therefore case study interviews/ questionnaires of senior HR and LMs deemed appropriate. Senior managers chosen as the most research has been on FLMs.	Thirteen senior managers involved – mix of questionnaires and interviews. FLMs not involved directly but discussed by senior managers.
Wright, Patrick, McMahan, Gary, Snell, Scott & Gerhart, Barry	Comparing Line and HR Executives Perceptions of HR Effectiveness: Service, Roles and Contributions	The value of HR in organisations vs. the perception from LMs.	Build on Ulrich type view of the development of a strategic business partner role for the HR function.	Fourteen large firms surveyed with site visits to seek greater depth of questioning. Senior HR/LMs' respondents. Looked at HR services; HR

				roles; HR contributions.
Wright, Patrick, Gardner, Timothy & Moynihan, Lisa	The impact of HR practices on the performance of business units	Examines the impact of HR practices and organisational commitment on operating performance and profitability (at the business unit level of performance). Relationship between organisational commitment and HR practices and performance established.	Overcoming previous shortcomings in the HRM-P literature by overcoming gap in understanding of causality. Uses AMO theory. 'Job Performance Theory'.	Uses a predictive design within 50 autonomous business units within the same corporation.
Wright, Patrick & Haggerty, John	Missing Variables in Theories of Strategic Human Resource Management: Time, Cause and Individuals	Builds on the strategic HRM body of work in advancing knowledge on how HRM works as a system in influencing organisational performance.	Part of the Strategic HRM debate/ HRM and Performance debate. Also considers RBV and AMO.	Review of existing literature with contribution to theory on where future research should be directed.

Appendix B Main Interview Questionnaires

LM Background Information Questionnaire

Please answer questions from the perspective of the Ochre Financial Year 2013 to 2014		
1	Age (at July 2014)	
2	Normal Place of Work / Base during the year 2013 – 2014?	
3	How long had you been with Ochre by the end of the 13/14 financial year? (Yrs/Mths)	
4	How long have you been managing people?	
5	How many of the team you had during 2013/14 had you inherited?	
6	How many had you hired yourself during 2013/14?	
7	During 2013 – 20 14 who was your LM?	
8	How long had you worked for your LM before 2013-2014?	
9	During 2013-2014 how long had you known your LM?	
10	The largest deals within your team in 2013/14?	
11	Which of the deals <u>your team completed</u> *most typifies* how your team achieved their results?	
12	Which of the deals <u>your team completed</u> *least typifies* how your team achieved their results?	
13	Which of the deals <u>your team did not complete</u> *most typifies* deals not won?	
14	Which of the deals <u>your team did not complete</u> *least typifies* deals not won?	

LM – Main Questionnaire

Part One - Ice Breaking & Relationship Building		Complete
Reminder on Confidentiality	Ensure the interview is clearly explained as confidential. The same with the outcomes and findings: *nothing will be shared with Ochre that can be traced to any individual, team or manager*.	
Hand-outs	Share hand-outs on confidentiality and FAQ's.	
Consent	Consent form completed	
Context	Describe background and context briefly. Check agreed interview time and repeat access option.	
Part Two – Setting the Context as 2013/2014		Complete
Time frame	Explain it is the period from 2013/2014 that is important.	
Context	Ask them to take a moment and think through the year from its start to its end. Ask them to think of important places, people and events that they remember from that period.	
Background Questionnaire	Ask to complete the Main Interview background questionnaire – allow 10 mins for this	
Purpose of	Explain that you are trying to build a picture of all the things that together make a	

Interview	difference to the performance that members of this function achieve. Using 2013/14 as a basis you are exploring the many drivers that go into the outcomes that were achieved.	

Part Three – Main Conversation on their Activity 2013/2014		Complete
Question	Probes from……	
How would you describe your management role during 2013/14?	- *Take a moment and think where that XXXXX took place; what time of year was it; why were you there etc* - *Things they had to do vs. things they chose to do* - *Background interview Q3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8*	
In your own words briefly outline how successful your team were during 2013/14?	- *Take a moment and think where that XXXXX took place; what time of year was it; why were you there etc* - *Things they had to do vs. things they chose to do* - *Background interview Q3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8* - *Previous answers*	
What three words would you use to describe your management style in 2013/14?	- *Examples & Differing perspectives* - *Meaning behind description* - *Rank these in terms of frequency / impact* - *What would change the ranking* - *Things they had to do vs. things they chose to do* - *Background interview Q3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8* - *HR Influences to this eg training?*	
In what ways do you think your management style changed, if at all, during 2013/14?	- *Meaning behind description & examples of impact on others as well source of change* - *Perspectives of tea, other Ochre stakeholders & non-Ochre stakeholders* - *Things they had to do vs. things they chose to do* - *Background interview Q3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8* - *HR Influences to this eg training?*	
(Building on their answer to Background Interview Q9 'Which of the deals your team <u>*completed most typifies*</u> how your team achieved their results?') *What factors caused this outcome (or outcome)?*	- *Take a moment and think where that XXXXX took place; what time of year was it; why were you there etc* - *What was your involvement in this (these)?* - *Things they had to do vs. things they chose to do* - *Background interview Q3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8* - *HR Influences on this?*	
(Building on their answer to Background Interview Q10 'Which of the deals your team <u>*completed least typifies*</u> how your team achieved their results?') *What factors caused this outcome (or outcome)?*	- *Take a moment and think where that XXXXX took place; what time of year was it; why were you there etc* - *What was your involvement in this (these)?* - *Things they had to do vs. things they chose to do* - *Background interview Q3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8* - *HR Influences on this?*	
(Building on their answer to Background Interview Q11 'Which of the deals your team <u>*did not complete most typifies*</u> deals that were not won?') *In your view why did this result happen?*	- *Take a moment and think where that XXXXX took place; what time of year was it; why were you there etc* - *On reflection how did your actions contribute to this?* - *Things they had to do vs. things they chose to do* - *Background interview Q3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8* - *HR Influences on this?*	
(Building on their answer to Background Interview Q12 'Which of the deals your team *did not complete least typifies* deals that were not won?') *In your view why did this result happen?*	- *Take a moment and think where that XXXXX took place; what time of year was it; why were you there etc* - *On reflection how did your actions contribute to this?* - *Things they had to do vs. things they chose to do* - *Background interview Q3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8* - *HR Influences on this?*	
Describe the HR practices you used during 2013/14 to influence the performance of your team? (Eg, Pay, bonuses, development programmes, PDR/Performance reviews etc).	- *Why did you select these examples?* - *In what ways did you use them 2013/14?* - *How did they work?* - *Are you still using these or others?* - *How might you change or improve these?* - *How they affected things they had to do vs. things they chose to do?* - *Previous answers*	

Part Four – Main Conversation on Influences on what influenced them 2013/2014		Complete
Question	Probes from……	
What were the main influences on the way you managed people during 2013/14?	- *Why did these things have such an influence on you?* - *Impact of influence?* - *Which stakeholders inside Ochre contributed most to the result you achieved during 2013 - 2014?* - *Which stakeholders outside Ochre contributed most to the result you achieved during 2013 - 2014?* - *What were the three Ochre working conditions you enjoyed most during 2013 – 2014?* - *What were the three main effects on you from Ochre working conditions during 2013 – 2014?* - *How they affected what they had to do vs. what they chose to do?* - *HR Influences on this?*	
Use three words or phrases to describe what your LM did during 2013 / 2014 that had a positive effect on you?	- *What would change the ranking* - *Things they had to do vs. things they chose to do* - *How did this impact you?* - *What was the consequence?* - *HR Influences on this?*	
Use three words or phrases to describe what your LM did during 2013 / 2014 that had a negative effect on you?	- *What would change the ranking* - *Things they had to do vs. things they chose to do* - *HR Influences on this?*	
Describe the three biggest influences on you that HR had in 2013/14? (Eg, Pay, bonuses, development programmes, PDR/Performance reviews etc).	- *Why did you select these examples?* - *In what ways did they influence you during 2013/14?* - *The list of effects in Qu 16* - *Sources of conditions?* - *How they affected things they had to do vs. things they chose to do?* - *Qu's 11, 15, 16, 17, 18 & 19 as required* - *Previous answers*	

Employee (Rep) Background Information Questionnaire

Please answer questions about the Ochre Financial Year 2013 - 2014		
1	Age (at July 2014)	
2	Normal Place of Work / Base during the year 2013 – 2014?	
3	How long had you been with Ochre by the end of the 13/14 financial year? (Yrs/Mths)	
4	During 2013 – 20 14 what was your LM name?	
5	How long had you worked for your LM before 2013-2014?	
6	During 2013-2014 how long had you known your LM?	
7	The number of deals you completed in 2013 – 2014?	
8	The number of clients you sold to during 2013 – 2014?	
9	How many different products / solutions did you sell in 2013-2014?	
10	Which of the deals <u>you completed</u> *most*	

	typifies how you achieved your results?	
11	Which of the deals <u>you completed</u> *least typifies* how you achieved your results?	
12	Which of the deals <u>you did not complete</u> *most typifies* deals that were not won?	
13	Which of the deals <u>you did not complete</u> *least typifies* deals that were not won?	

Employee (Rep) Main Questionnaire

Part One - Ice Breaking & Relationship Building		Complete
Reminder on Confidentiality	Ensure the interview is clearly explained as confidential. The same with the outcomes and findings: *nothing will be shared with Ochre that can be traced to any individual, team or manager*.	
Hand-outs	Share hand-outs on confidentiality and FAQ's.	
Consent	Consent form completed	
Context	Describe background and context briefly. Check agreed interview time and repeat access option.	

Part Two – Setting the Context as 2013/2014		Complete
Time frame	Explain it is the period from 2013/2014 that is important.	
Context	Ask them to take a moment and think through the year from its start to its end. Ask them to think of important places, people and events that they remember from that period.	
Background Questionnaire	Ask to complete the Main Interview background questionnaire – allow 10 mins for this	
Purpose of Interview	Explain that you are trying to build a picture of all the things that together make a difference to the performance that members of this function achieve. Using 2013/14 as a basis you are exploring the many drivers that go into the outcomes that were achieved.	

Part Three – Main Conversation on their Activity 2013/2014		Complete
Question	Probes from……	
How would you describe your role during 2013/14?	- *Take a moment and think where that XXXXX took place; what time of year was it; why were you there etc.* - *Background interview Q5 , 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 & 13*	
In your own words briefly outline how successful you were during 2013/14?	- *Background interview Q5 , 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 & 13* - *Previous answers*	
(Building on their answer to Background Interview Q10 'Which of the deals you completed most typifies how you achieved your results?') *What factors caused this outcome (or outcome)?*	- *Take a moment and think where that XXXXX took place; what time of year was it; why were you there etc.* - *What was your involvement in this (these)?* - *Things they had to do vs. things they chose to do* - *Background interview Q5 , 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 & 13* - *HR Influences on this?*	
(Building on their answer to Background Interview Q11 'Which of the deals you completed least typifies how you achieved your results?') *What factors caused this outcome (or outcome)?*	- *Take a moment and think where that XXXXX took place; what time of year was it; why were you there etc.* - *What was your involvement in this (these)?* - *Things they had to do vs. things they chose to do* - *Background interview Q5 , 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 & 13* - *HR Influences on this?*	
(Building on their answer to Background Interview Q12 'Which of the deals you did not complete most typifies deals that were not won?') *In your view why did this result*	- *Take a moment and think where that XXXXX took place; what time of year was it; why were you there etc* - *On reflection how did your actions contribute to this?* - *Things they had to do vs. things they chose to do* - *Background interview Q5 , 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 & 13*	

happen?	- *HR Influences on this?*	
(Building on their answer to Background Interview Q13 'Which of the deals you did not complete least typifies deals that were not won?') *In your view why did you this result happen?*	- *Take a moment and think where that XXXXX took place; what time of year was it; why were you there etc.* - *On reflection how did your actions contribute to this?* - *Things they had to do vs. things they chose to do* - *Background interview Q5 , 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 & 13* - *HR Influences on this?*	
Part Four – Main Conversation on Influences on their Activity 2013/2014		Complete
Question	Probes from……	
Describe your sales technique during 2013/14?	- *Take a moment and think where that XXXXX took place; what time of year was it; why were you there etc.* - *How typical was this? (if not, why not)* - *Things they had to do vs. things they chose to do* - *Background interview Q5 , 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 & 13* - *HR Influences on this?*	
In what ways did your sales technique change during 2013/14?	- *Take a moment and think where that XXXXX took place; what time of year was it; why were you there etc* - *What were the reasons for this change?* - *Things they had to do vs. things they chose to do* - *Background interview Q5 , 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 & 13* - *HR Influences on this?*	
What were the three Ochre working conditions you enjoyed most during 2013 – 2014?	- *Ask them to rank these then explain the ranking* - *What would have made the order different?* - *In what ways did these influence you during 2013/14?* - *The list of effects in Qu 10* - *Sources of conditions?* - *How they affected things they had to do vs. things they chose to do?* - *Background interview Q5 , 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 & 13* - *HR Influences on this?*	
Which stakeholders inside Ochre contributed most to the result you achieved during 2013 – 2014?	- *Stakeholder & Position?* - *Impact Made on You?* - *HR Influences on this?*	
Which stakeholders outside Ochre contributed most to the result you achieved during 2013 – 2014?	- *Stakeholder & Position?* - *Impact Made on You?* - *HR Influences on this?*	
Use three words or phrases to describe what your LM did during 2013 / 2014 that had a positive effect on you?	- *Why did you rank these in this order?* - *What would have made the order different?* - *In what ways did these influence you during 2013/14?* - *The list of effects in Qu 16* - *Sources of conditions?* - *How they affected things they had to do vs. things they chose to do?* - *Qu's 11, 15, 16, 17, 18 & 19 as required* - *HR Influences on this?*	
Use three words or phrases to describe what your LM did during 2013 / 2014 that had a negative effect on you?	- *Why did you rank these in this order?* - *What would have made the order different?* - *In what ways did these influence you during 2013/14?* - *The list of effects in Qu 16* - *Sources of conditions?* - *How they affected things they had to do vs. things they chose to do?* - *Qu's 11, 15, 16, 17, 18 & 19 as required* - *HR Influences on this?*	
Describe the three biggest influences on you that HR had in 2013/14? (Eg, Pay, bonuses, development programmes, PDR/Performance reviews etc).	- *Why did you select these examples?* - *In what ways did they influence you during 2013/14?* - *The list of effects in Qu 16* - *Sources of conditions?* - *How they affected things they had to do vs. things they chose*	

	to do? - *Qu's 11, 15, 16, 17, 18 & 19 as required* - *Previous answers*	

Appendix C Exploratory Interviews

As the interviews were exploratory, while pre-prepared questions were used they were intended only as a simple framework to initiate a conversation which had a focus on the areas of interest. The interviewees' experience during the most recent complete financial year, FY14 (July 2013-June 2014) was used to provide structure and focus for the interview. This made the experience straightforward and natural for the interviewee, as well as helping them have a natural conversation, creating a relaxed and natural dialogue. Three general questions were prepared and used:

- Question One (Relevant for all themes)
    - I am curious to understand a bit about you, a bit about what you did, a bit about how you did it and then a bit about why you did it?
- Question Two (Relevant mostly for LM's responsibilities / causal connections)
    - Who or what were the influences upon you during this period?
- Question Three (Relevant for exploring the mix of prescribed and discretionary)
    - Of the (things described) which were done because you chose to do them and which were

The interviewees were encouraged to work through this and subsequent questions systematically from 'What' to 'Why'. They were allowed to do this in the way that was most natural to them in order to help them best recall events. This was done by keeping interruptions to a minimum and allowing them time to locate and extract the memories of the events they were being asked to recall (Kvale, 1996; Fisher and Geiselman, 1992). Because the interviews spoke so openly and freely, Questions Two and Three ended up being used mostly as probes on influences and whether their choices or actions were prescribed or discretionary. Prompts were used to either clarify terms or explorations or to probe for the potential sources of actions or choices, such as the decision to build a relationship with a certain stakeholder. This helped broaden the data gathered from being solely from their personal agency perspective, so that they described the external structural influences acting upon them from their environment. These things combined were done with the intention of helping the interview fulfil the aims of better understanding the areas of thematic inquiry identified.

Immediately after each interview, in order to capture insights while they were ‘fresh’, notes were made under the following categories: Immediate general observations or insights generated by the interview; Summary of what the main themes were that emerged from the interview; Summary of what overall picture is emerging from this and other interviews. These notes were revisited before each subsequent exploratory interview. Please note, in this section FLEs are designated ‘individual contributors’, (ICs) which is Ochre Inc. terminology for a front line employee with no direct reports. These were also referred to as ‘reps’ by Ochre Inc. In the main study the decision was made to refer to these as the more commonly understood first line employee (FLE).

Exploratory Study Analysis

This section summarises the analysis of the findings of the exploratory study. The analysis utilised an analytical framework adapted from the research design literature (Easterby-Smith et al., 2006, pp123; Miles & Huberman, 1996: pp57) that broke analysis down into three phases: Familiarisation, Descriptive and Conceptualisation. Interview recordings were transcribed so as to allow that written as well as aural analysis and the data were reviewed systematically to get a general understanding of the text, and then emergent themes were identified using rudimentary ‘codes’ following the systematic analysis steps described above. The analysis process used an inductive approach for the first two phases chosen so to be methodical, transparent and to allow findings to emerge from the acquired data. The last stage, the conceptualisation phase, used retroductive and abductive reasoning in addition to inductive to connect the data found with the following conceptual forms:

- Structural influences. These which are ‘formed from historic causal configurations’ (Edwards et al., 2014: pp89). These can arise from formal organisational systems or processes, or from socially derived norms, customs or the agency of others.
- Agents. Those who are enacting practices, discretionary choices or actions and relationships (Edwards et al., 2014: pp89).

- Actions or effects from structure or agency. These are the acts, activities, meanings and participation (Lofland et al., 2006), that allow agents to interact with structure, each other and create outcomes.

Looking at what we already knew from the literature, and more specifically the components of people management, it was therefore possible to create a taxonomy that helped identify components and connections from the data, as well as how these might interact together. This was summarised as:

- Structural Influences
    - Things that had influence upon Actors, Actions or Choices
    - Created by formal processes, socially derived norms or the agency of others
- Agents
    - The 'actors' present or involved
- Agency - of Choice
    - Agency of discretionary & prescribed decisions
- Agency - of Action
    - Agency of what each actor did

This is summarised in the table below.

Findings from Exploratory Interviews

Interviewee	Conceptual 'Component'				
	Structural Influences	Agents	Agency		
			Choices – Discretionary	Choices – Prescribed	Actions
ICs	HR influences (through policies such as reward, appraisals, role descriptions etc. as well as through	Other Ochre reps. Ochre LM. Customers. Sales support (in Ochre). Ochre corporate. Ochre senior managers (in different	Which customer opportunities to pursue. Which customers to focus upon. Who to build relationships with in customers. Who to build relationships in	Accounts within portfolio. Products or services to sell. Information delivered to LM. Some use of time controlled by LM (through required	Generate influence. Conduct customer research. Select best customer opportunities. Organise direction of

	people). Line Manager. Line Managers' Line Managers. Other Executives within Ochre. Client stakeholders. Other ICs. Ochre administrative stakeholders. Ochre 'Operations' department. Competitors. Ochre Pre-sales stakeholders.	functions). Other Ochre LMs. Ochre operations. Ochre HR. Ochre LMs' LM.	Ochre. Who to seek help from in Ochre. Who to seek help from in customers. Use of time. Who to try and influence internally. Who to try and influence in customers. How others are influenced. How maintain personal motivation. How to hide deviation from required activities or areas of focus. How to explain deviation from required activities or areas of focus. How LM used to influence other Ochre stakeholders. Whether to request LM to influence customer stakeholders. Sharing 'informal rules' with other Ochre ICs. How other LM's are used to influence other Ochre stakeholders. Whether to request	reporting and customer visits). How all stakeholders are engaged with (rules). Final decision on allocation of credit for sales made by ICs (can) be made by senior managers. Who can and cannot be told about opportunities. No of customer visits a week. Legal compliance for final sale contract. Administration requirements. Barriers created by others (within Ochre) agendas.	customer effort. Attend meetings. Conduct conversations (internal). Conduct conversation (external). Navigate Ochre. Presentations. Mediate. Negotiate. Motivate self. Report information. Getting help. Giving help. Alter customer perceptions. Speak to customers' customers. Challenge customer's 'thinking'. Generate influence through customer (business) research. Organising self and others. Selecting multitudes of customer opportunities to

			own or other LMs to influence customer stakeholders. Sharing 'informal rules' with other Ochre ICs. Developing Ochre's business understanding of the customer's problems. How sales target allocated between team members.		pursue. Production of the 'business message' about a customer. Select best customer opportunities for other reps. Organise direction of other's customer effort.
LM	Influence of peer LMs in Ochre. Influence of Line Manager (and those above) in same function in Ochre. Participating in HR practices on recruitment, performance management and people development. Influence of customers. Influence of other	Ochre reps (that they had responsibility for). Immediate LMs. Other (peer) LMs. More senior Ochre LMs not directly above them (same function). More senior Ochre LMs not directly above them (different function).	Composition of team members. The way team members are selected. How team is motivated. How operational systems are developed. Way team is expected to operate (beyond the achievement of the sales target). How team are developed. Way team is supported through influence on customers. Way team members are supported through influence on	Customer sectors. Size of accounts. Adhere to HR policies when managing team. Management of budget. Overall sales target. Frequency of reporting. Taking part in Talent Review Boards (meetings reviewing how team members are being developed).	Set objectives. Set standards (operational). Set standards (behavioural). Building relationships with team. Set a clear direction (at a team level). Control activities and choices of team. Motivating team. Supporting team. Developing team. Setting a strategy. Managing information.

	executives in Ochre (outside function).		internal stakeholder. Way team is supported through influence on customers on behalf of team. How they spend time with team. The culture that is created within the team. Encouraging team to develop themselves. How customer opportunities are selected or deselected. Finding people. Enforcing own perspective. 'Enforcing attrition'.		Creating operational systems. Letting ICs use them for support with customer influence. Looking after general welfare of team. Negotiating internally on behalf of ICs. Managing performance. Hiring.

Methodically putting the data into this taxonomy of Structural Influences, Agents and Agency, let me expand the understanding developed of not only what the components were in people management, but the complexity with which they could configure and connect together. Of particular interest was the flexibility of configuration options available between line managers and employees. It also contributed to appreciating the potential number and type of responsibilities present for which constituted line manager responsibilities, confirming the findings from Hales (2005). These are outlined below.

Line Manager Responsibilities

Interviewee	Activity / Description	Potential LM Responsibility
Employees	*'Appraisals, well I have a review every week but it is more around engagement and maybe some of the behaviour that I attribute with my goals'.*	*Enable*
	'They [LM] will be scrutinising every deal that I have.'	*Control*
	'I try to….take a real interest in them as a person, not just when they	*Lead*

	walk through your door, but what are they all about? What motivates them? Why are they here? All that sort of thing'.	
	'They (my LM) are like an attack dog (against other Ochre stakeholders) for me at times. Yeah, I use them like that sometimes.'	*Stakeholder Influencing*
LM	*'We do develop an individual plan for each person in the team – their development plan looking out over a couple of years.'*	*Enact*
	'I sort of had my say in who I actually wanted to manage'. (Involved decisions with MM not HR).	*Selecting Team*
	Enforcing attrition of unwanted team members *'Yeah, a couple of them definitely'.*	*Performance Management*

Even though only a few interviews were conducted, they succeeded in contributing sufficiently to the researcher's understanding of the themes of interest. This was potentially because the researcher had already acquired insight into Ochre Inc. so was able to use this insight to their advantage.

Systematic Interview Analysis – Overview

The analysis process used an inductive approach, chosen so as to be methodical, transparent and to allow findings to emerge from the acquired data. This utilised an inductive analytical framework adapted from the research design literature (Easterby-Smith et al., 2006, pp123; Miles & Huberman, 1996: pp57) that broke analysis into three phases: Familiarisation, Descriptive and Conceptualisation. Interview recordings were transcribed so to allow that written as well as aural analysis. The data were reviewed systematically to get a general understanding of the text, and then emergent themes were identified using rudimentary 'codes' following the systematic analysis steps described above.

First Phase of Analysis – Familiarisation

Familiarisation involved re-reading each transcript, listening to the recordings, and reviewing field notes. The purpose of this was to ensure that there was enough confidence that the data that had been gathered was sufficient to allow the next phases to be conducted. This process began in the field, with field notes and documenting initial impressions on whether the themes of interest were being addressed. Then once the interviews were completed each was reviewed again in turn, along with the field notes. As only three interviews had been felt necessary, this was seen as an important

step, so when all the data had been collected these were reviewed with a high degree of care: each interview was listened to in its entirety; the transcripts were read from start to finish; and the field notes were reviewed. Satisfied after this step that there were sufficient data to address the questions regarding fields of interest, the decision was made to move on to the second phase of analysis, the Descriptive Phase.

Second Phase of Analysis – Descriptive

The Descriptive Phase was designed to allow phenomena within the interviews to emerge based on a 'literal interpretation' of the data. The result would be insights into the interviews individually and as a 'whole' which when collated and reviewed allowed phenomena to emerge, but done in a structured and systematic way.

This was achieved by using a simple logical causal model, labelled 'What they did?'; 'How they did this?' and 'Why they did things this way?' to categorise the themes emerging from the data. Categorising the data in this way revealed commonalities, trends and norms present within the accounts of each interviewee, as well as the interviews as a whole. These outputs were collated into a single table below:

Interviewee Activities

Interviewee	**Summary from Transcript**		
	What they did?	**How they did this?**	**Why did they do it this way?**
IC – A	'One huge deal at Vodafone'. Plus 'half a dozen others' out of a pool of '20 deals'. '[You need to make sure of the items selected once the deal is agreed] that one of them is mine and that is an internal conversation. So you keep having a conversation obviously, making sure that the customer is saying yes I need that, yes I need that and I understand why I need that and yes I understand what the value is – you have a role of just keep reiterating that.' Can only sell to those with or about to by Ochre. Have a variety of products that can be sold to these customers. 'I have to maintain the value inside the BOM – Bill of Materials' 'I have managed to keep it in the	'I will talk to the guys and say, yep I think there is a good play for this aspect of my stuff and we should be talking about this and these are the benefits and we have recruited them and they say yes. So I get in and have the conversation. I sell to the customer, technically and benefits type sell, but I probably won't get involved in a closing conversation because my half million, three quarters of million, million stuff dollar stuff will be part of a 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 100 million deal.' 'So once I have done that sell to the customer, my role then changes to continuing to sell internally. So then I have to make sure that whoever is controlling the deal does not drop my stuff off the deal'. 'All you are doing is reminding	'I am often working on as part of bigger deals' / 'I get embroiled in bigger deals' 'What happens internally is people start carving things out of that bill of materials.' 'Most of the business is done in q4, the fact that I am having conversations in q1 and q2 and it is in a bigger deal it is going to close in q4 because the customer know that they will get a better deal out of us in q4. 60% of Ochres business is done in q4.' '(So they [customers) are gaming you? Yes of course they are, why would they not?' 'If the prime has got five million he does have a decision about what is inside

	five that stayed in, then it is going to be carved up what the value is of that and that is not a conversation with the customer. So the customer says its five million and they have agreed that and they have then agreed that five million.' 'Internally, that five million gets carved up across those five items which may come from five different pillars within the organisation'. 'So then you have got five sales people, prime sales people, you may have co primes in there also arguing. You will have the prime reps director, you will have my director and a co-prime under that pillar, then it will be duplicated here, then it will be duplicated there, duplicated there and duplicated there. And they are all fighting internally about what the numbers look like internally in that five million'. 'You spend a lot of time having a conversation again, this thing internally, abut saying so you are talking to this customer, they are trying to do this, here is how you can enhance that proposition to them and how it can deliver something.' 'Identifying those customers that are going to deliver my target' [in first six months]'. 'It's a bit of a lot of effort because even where there is a lot of stuff of mine on the bill of materials already that they are using, so of course they were going to renew it, you still like to make sure and you still have to make it clear that internally it should stay there. 'It was corporate that divvied it up, so it was not even the team that decided how the split of revenue was going to go or any internal agreement in UK' 'Involved going and seeing various stakeholders inside virgin media, talking to them about how they saw themselves going forward, what the implications of the acquisition were, what they wanted to be, what was happening and then making sure that they could see the value in each of the three products that I was proposing and then once they had said, yep, yep, yep, got that, understand it, see why we want that, then its back to internal meetings, deal reviews that are going on and making sure that I could articulate the value to	them of the conversation' 'That is not the conversation you are having, you are just saying what is the scale, what is the price that we are going to put together that is going to get us to a deal? But you are not selling features benefits, value, return on investment, total cost of ownership – you are not having those conversations. They already know it and they are just buying more. So you can spend more time internally making sure your product is still on the bill of materials and maintaining its value that you did selling to the customer.' People are going to take you along on the new journey for the next fiscal…… you have also qualified out some of those people that did the big deal …..in the last week of May of that fiscal. 'The stuff that I have helps them manage change or delivers change' '[Used the previous] five months…it meant I could network around the people I needed to know and talk to them about how they should be positioning things…..explaining why they should be introducing me [to their customers]' 'So you need that relationship with those prime reps, or their pre-sales people'. 'Make sure that the customer is feeding up their chain of command so that when they are sitting down and saying do we want this or do we not want it, you make sure that they are saying that there is a tick in the box' 'You have also got to be making sure that internally that everyone knows that you are engaged and things like that' I heard through my contacts through the prime that this deal was going ahead' 'We have got buy in from these people, from these people, from these people and it should be there, its rock solid and you should not be looking to take this out'	that five million'. 'Yeah, in the last hour [your stuff can get dropped by another senior internal stakeholder]. And of course, you have got no influence, you find out days later'. 'I had a couple that did that'. 'Most of the deals are done in May, an awful lot of them are done in the last week and quite a few are done on the evening of the last day of the month of the year.' 'So, its harder if you are trying to sell stuff from this pillar, when the deal is being managed by someone from another pillar.' 'Yes; so that was always going to save me or it was going to destroy me and that is a worrying thing and again that was a huge, enormous thing. That was enormous thing.' (Describing the effect of a deal being pulled due to outside 'political' reasons) Different senior manager influences from different 'pillars' (Business functions's). 'I just love talking technology'' And the pay cheque that drops into the accounts, let's not be silly here. It's not because I do it for the love. It's nice that I love it and they pay me as well.'

	the customer and the value of the product out of the pie'. 'Because you are doing two things; you are now saying yes the customer wants it, they have these problems, this product addresses that problem, they will get these benefits, the return on the investment is x, the total cost of ownership is y over three years of the ULA they will accrue this benefit. And they understand it and they have got budget if internally within virgin media they decide that they are going to carve up that 23 million and associate the costs down to individual product purchase or value or a share of or however they might do it. so all that is done, but I then have to be able to articulate that in internal meetings and not just with my core tech rep who I am working with because when I am a co prime with a core tech rep they get commission on what I sell as well.' 'Conversations'	'I have got to have a good relationship with my core tech rep, I have got to have good relationships with other people in the other lines of business within Ochre, whoever is controlling it. So has my prime, he has got to have a good relationship as well. So I might have a good relationship with this apps guy because I sell some stuff with him and we have worked together on some deals and he got some value out of me working with him, but now he is driving a deal and there isn't any of my stuff, of his stuff, of my stuff jointly in there - I have got a good relationship, I can explain it to him. If he hates this guy's guts because he has stitched him up on a previous deal, I get shafted as well.' 'You are fighting to make sure that your slice of the pie is maintained' 'Use Line Manager as an attack dog if they try and take my stuff in the Bill of Material'. Use Line Manager as a source of contact information and to make introductions / navigate who has influence inside the organisation. Use to impress or broaden customer relationships / network.	
LM – A	Build good Ochre propositions for sales people to build relationships with. Set standards and objectives. Coach and guide team. Clearly articulate delegated responsibilities. Getting the right team in place 'Design'. 'I just spent a lot of time just sort of getting to know the guys.'' Trying not to be the great I am' 'Because everyone is motivated differently and there are obviously a lot of sales people who are motivated by material gain, but there are other things that motivate. And some like to be managed in a certain way, some like to be managed in a different what. So what I try to do is take a real interest in them as a person, not just when they walk through your door, but what are they all about? What motivates them?	So, there were some interesting conversations to have at the start; I think what is really, really important is to set out the objectives and expectations right at the start. So I have learnt over the five years I have been in management that is really the most important thing. If you set out at the start what the objectives of the business are, what the goals of the business are, why we are doing it, why we think we will be successful, why they are in the team, the role that they will play within the team. I think if you make that really clear early, that is probably the single most important thing that you can do to make sure the team is successful.' 'There has to be an acceptance that in my team if you come and work in it then you are probably only going to do a couple of bigger deals per year. In some of the other	'So rather than having a tactic and saying that I have not chosen the goal just call lots and lots and lots of tactical engagements which may or may not achieve my number. I would rather go for a much more strategical engagement which may or may not hit the year end objectives'.

	Why are they here? All that sort of thing. And then I try to manage them as a team, but then individually as well. So there were certain guys in my team that if you manage them, sort of micromanage them on a daily basis they get totally demotivated so you have to understand the best way to motivate those individuals. And some need help, some actually like loads of feedback all the time - you are doing a good job, you are doing a good job, you are not doing a good job – all that sort of thing. Some really need that feedback, others don't, others aren't interested in that feedback. Others just all they are interested in is their pay check and I have that cross section of people now; people that do not care about anything other than what they are getting paid at the end of the month. So in terms of my style of management, I try to get to know them a little bit more than just that sort of manager'.	teams they are doing deals every quarter or every couple of months, whatever it might be. And actually some people do not like that and it is probably the reason why some have moved on from my team.' 'My style of management is I want the guys to develop, so just because it is a big deal I do not feel I have to go in and own the negotiation'. 'He is more experienced at selling IT than I am probably, he has been in the business longer and is more than capable, so why just because I am the manager do I have to go and negotiate the big deal? So it was more just coaching him, making him sure he was ok, that we had the right executive sponsorship – so again, it was that going back to trying to think of the person as a whole.'	
IC - B	Sees the number as an output from a distinct set of activities: 'So performance for me is actually doing the right thing and I not it is now what senior management may want to hear, but performance for me is about doing the right thing – the number is an outcome of doing the right thing.' 'Doing the right thing professionally, doing the right thing for the organisation as well as the customer and for yourself personally. The number should follow'. 'So I am doing the high level strategic setting and I am putting together teams of people underneath or working with me to do the individual selling'. Aim is to influence customer at a high level to generate demand for Ochre products and services, then a team can come in and close deals. 'How can I make data more relevant?' That was one of my performance goals, the other one was doing my target to get my number. Performance goals were a mix of new role and the 'number'.	More than just building influential relationships but about understanding the organisational issues in XXXXX plc (the customer) 'Go and change the nature of the way that XXXXX plc interacts with its customers and its organisation.' 'I try to be as transformative as that, if that makes sense' Finding people to help a key drain on time: 'Actually finding the person to talk to or finding the person that is going to be effective is sometimes quite time consuming and you find a lot of cycles talking to the wrong people and you just have to move on and find the right person. That is basically, that is probably the most helpful thing in Ochre is actually find the right person to talk to. It can be as silly as how do I fill in my forecast correctly, or how do I … you know, there is somebody that knows and it is great and they will spend time to help you.'	70% of time doing organising / 15% talking to customers: 'its organising something, getting somebody to talk to somebody else, getting somebody to respond on an e-mail, calling somebody back that has got a problem or sorting something out. I would say I would spend the other 15% of it in front of the customer and 15% planning.' 'So me and my performance is all about internal perception, it's about access to power, can I get to the people I need to get to in order to do my job efficiently?' Customers are challenged as part of the sales process: 'Because you now need to challenge your customers, your customers probably know as about your business, about Ochre, as you do. And you now need to actually go back and challenge them about what their assumptions are and what they are trying to do'.

Third Phase of Analysis – Conceptualisation Analysis

The Conceptualisation Phase differed from the Descriptive Phase and went further than categorising literal descriptions, by adding some interpretation into what the 'meaning' was from interviewee's perspectives. It involved exploring the analysis of the First and Second Phases to categorise the different 'causal' components, (in other words what types of connections connected the interviewees to the performance they had delivered and to the organisation) and the types of components that had emerged (who or what was involved).

This was then collated using the key concepts that were of interest for the exploratory interviews and already known about people management to create a taxonomy which was used to collate the findings.

The interpretation was begun by bringing a critical realist lens to seek and identify the following conceptual forms:

- Structural influences. These are 'formed from historic causal configurations' (Edwards et al., 2014: pp89). These can arise from formal organisational systems or processes, or from socially derived norms, customs or the agency of others.
- Agents. Those who are enacting practices, discretionary choices or actions and relationships (Edwards et al., 2014: pp89).
- Actions or effects from structure or agency. These are the acts, activities, meanings and participation (Lofland et al., 2006), that allow agents to interact with structure, each other and create outcomes.

Looking at what we already knew from the literature, and more specifically the components of people management, it was therefore possible to create a taxonomy that helped identify components and connections from the data, as well as how these might interact together. This was summarised as:

- Structural Influences
    - Things that had influence upon Actors, Actions or Choices
    - Created by formal processes, socially derived norms or the agency of others
- Agents

- The ‘actors’ present or involved

- Agency - of Choice
  - Agency of discretionary & prescribed decisions
- Agency - of Action
  - Agency of what each actor did

Methodically putting the data into this taxonomy of Structural Influences, Agents and Agency, let me expand the understanding developed of not only what the components were in people management, but the complexity with which they could configure and connect together. Of particular interest was the flexibility of configuration options available between LMs and ICs. It also contributed to appreciating the potential number and type of responsibilities present for LM responsibilities. This is presented in below:

Interviewee	Activity / Description	Potential LM Responsibility
ICs	*‘Appraisals, well I have a review every week but it is more around engagement and maybe some of the behaviour that I attribute with my goals*.’	*Enable*
	‘They [LM] will be scrutinising every deal that I have.’	*Control*
	‘I try to….take a real interest in them as a person, not just when they walk through your door, but what are they all about? What motivates them? Why are they here? All that sort of thing.’	*Lead*
	‘They (my LM) are like an attack dog (against other Ochre stakeholders) for me at times. Yeah, I use them like that sometimes.’	*Stakeholder Influencing*
	‘But what they (my LM) did know without a doubt better than me was he knew Ochre better than me and so he gave me … when I would get stuck I just made a call to him and said I am stuck with this and he said call x, y, z guy – call y guy – go and talk to … and give me the help and direction in order to achieve.’	*Organisational Guide*
	‘They (my LM) kept his eye out for me. He knew what my goals were, we had had that conversation and he kept his eye out for me.’	*Protector / Mentor*
LM	*‘We do develop an individual plan for each person in the team – their development plan looking out over a couple of years.’*	*Enact*
	‘I sort of had my say in who I actually wanted to manage’. (Involved decisions with MM not HR).	*Selecting Team*

	Enforcing attrition of unwanted team members. 'Yeah, a couple of them definitely.'	*Performance Management*
	'My style of management is I want the guys to develop, so just because it is a big deal I do not feel I have to go in and own the negotiation.'	*Developing People*
	'Because everyone is motivated differently and there are obviously a lot of sales people who are motivated by material gain, but there are other things that motivate. And some like to be managed in a certain way, some like to be managed in a different way.'	*Motivation*
	'So, there were some interesting conversations to have at the start; I think what is really, really important is to set out the objectives and expectations right at the start.'	*Objectives Setting*
	'Deal review. Weekly calls. 1:2:1 every six weeks.'	*Information Reporting*
	'So I brought a guy in with a lot of applications sales experience, so he has brought to the team a different skillset than we had before.'	*Design of Team*
	'He is more experienced at selling IT than I am probably, he has been in the business longer and is more than capable, so why just because I am the manager do I have to go and negotiate the big deal? So it was more just coaching him, making him sure he was ok, that we had the right executive sponsorship – so again, it was that going back to trying to think of the person as a whole.'	*Partnering Sales Process*
	Formed a new business area within Ochre (Retail Business within Tech).	*Business Planning*
	'But what he (my LM) did know without a doubt better than me was he knew Ochre better than me and so he gave me … when I would get stuck I just made a call to him and said I am stuck with this and he said call x, y, z guy – call y guy – go and talk to … and give me the help and direction in order to achieve.'	*Organisational Guide*

However, it also became clear from the analysis that while the categories of responsibilities identified by Purcell were present and clearly identified, so too was the suggestion that LMs have other responsibilities additional to these. Without further

verification, what these actual responsibilities are cannot be stated with absolute certainty. It is possible that some of the responsibilities found are examples of 'Lead' and 'Control' as described by Purcell et al (2003). However it is argued that this is because Purcell's definitions of these are very broad and open to interpretation. This means alternative explanations could also be offered and it cannot be said with confidence that they match the broad definitions used by Purcell. However, whether these are the additional responsibilities expected from other literature sources from the non HR literature found in the Systematic Review, also cannot be stated with confidence. All that can be said is that many actions that may be known responsibilities, but may also be additional responsibilities were found. This supported the understanding LMs' people management responsibilities were less clearly defined than the earlier literature had suggested:

Potential LM Responsibility	HR		Management		New
	Enact	*Enable*	*Lead*	*Control*	*Other*
Selecting Team	Yes.	Poss.	Poss.	No.	N/A
Performance Management	Yes.	No.	Poss.	Yes.	N/A
Developing People	Poss.	Poss.	Poss.	No.	N/A
Motivation	Poss.	Poss.	Yes.	No.	N/A
Objectives Setting	No.	No.	No.	Yes.	N/A
Business Planning	No.	No.	Poss.	Poss.	'Lead' (or 'Control')?
Information Reporting	No.	No.	No.	Poss.	Info Reporting (or 'Control')?
Design of Team	No.	No.	Poss.	No.	'Design' or 'Lead'?
Partnering Sales Process	No.	No.	Poss.	No.	'Partner', (or 'Control' or 'Lead')?
Stakeholder Influencing	No.	No.	Poss.	No.	'Partner', (or 'Lead')?
Organisational Guide	No.	No.	Poss.	Poss.	'Partner'(or 'Control' or 'Lead')?
Protector / Mentor	No.	No.	Poss.	No.	'Partner' (or 'Lead')?